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CONTENTS

FOR APRIL 1953

PAGE

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LUTHER'S HERMENEUTICS FOR THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION. <i>Raymond F. Surburg</i>	241
THE GREAT PHYSICIAN. <i>Frederic Niedner</i>	262
THINKING CLEARLY ON THE RSV. <i>Arthur F. Katt</i>	273
HOMILETICS	283
THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER	296
BOOK REVIEW	313

Rafast, Karlheinz: Die Genesis. — Aalders, G. Ch.: Short Introduction to the Pentateuch. — Ladd, George E.: Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God. — Iwand, H. J.: Glaubensgerechtigkeit nach Luthers Lehre. — Hannab, Walton: Darkness Visible. — "Vindex": Light Invisible. — Hoeksema, Herman: Eating and Drinking Christ. — Zwemer, Samuel M.: Apostle to Islam. — Moore, Arthur J.: The Mighty Saviour. — Hamilton, J. Wallace: Ride the Wild Horses. — McLennan, David A.: Joyous Adventure. — Harrison, Eugene Myers and Wilson, Walter L.: How to Win Souls. — Ayer, William Ward: Flame for the Altar.

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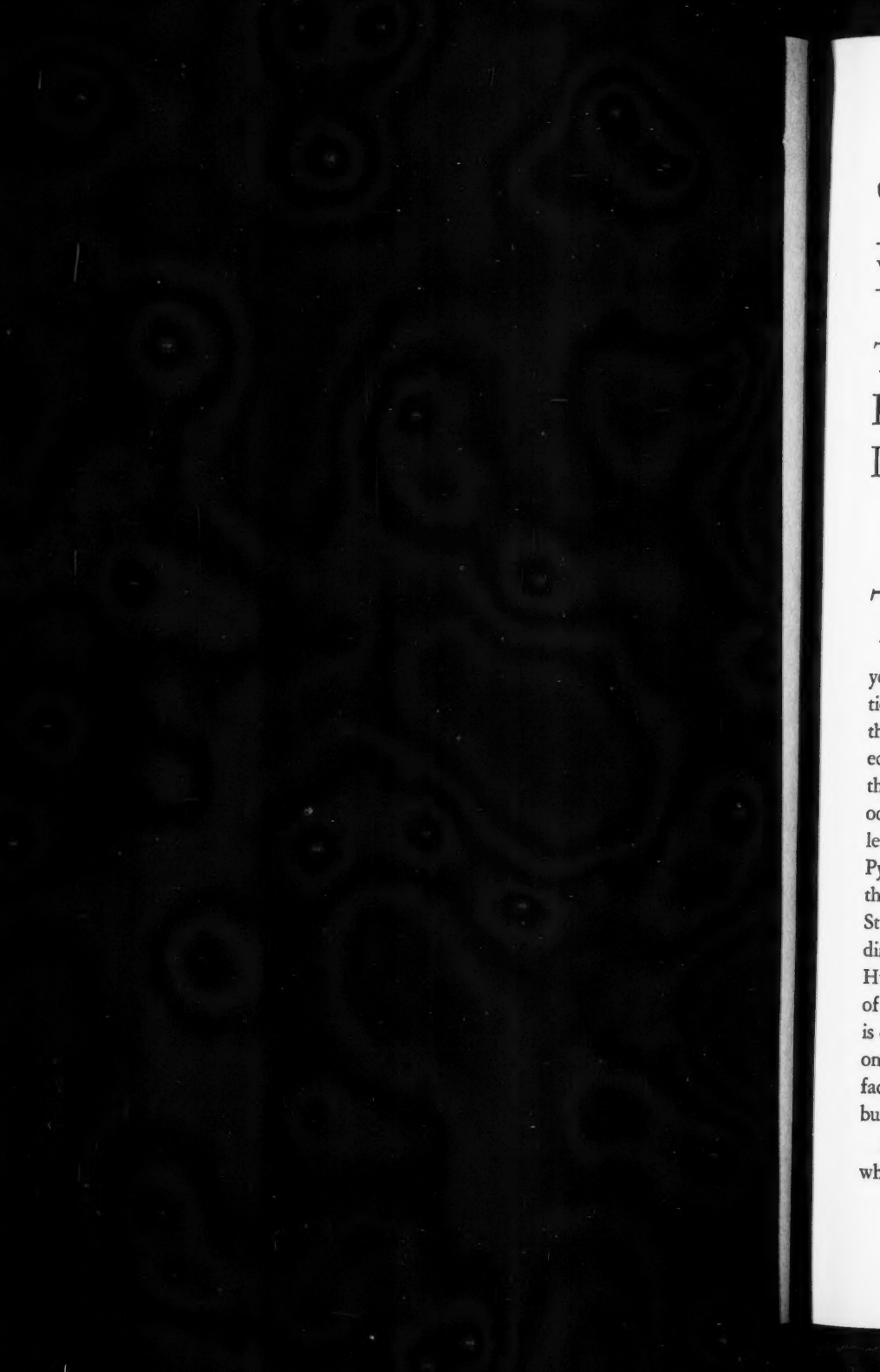
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The Significance of Luther's Hermeneutics for the Protestant Reformation

By RAYMOND F. SURBURG

I

THE Protestant Reformation, called by Roman Catholics the Protestant Revolt, is generally conceded to have been one of the most significant movements in the last two thousand years of world history. Historians who have treated the Reformation have interpreted it from at least four distinct points of view: the religious-political, the rationalist, the liberal-romantic, and the economic-evolutionary.¹ A current scholar, Rosenstock-Huessy, lists the Protestant Reformation as the first of four political revolutions occurring between 1517 and 1918. He designates Luther as the leader of the German revolution in the sixteenth century, John Pym the head of the British in the seventeenth century, Robespierre the guiding spirit of the French in the eighteenth century, and Stalin the leader of the Russian in the twentieth century. The direction taken by all four revolutions, according to Rosenstock-Huessy, was determined by the process of the natural development of mankind.² Such an interpretation of the Lutheran Reformation is erroneous as a result of at least two incorrect premises; it is based on a wrong philosophy of history, and it fails to grasp the salient fact that the Lutheran Reformation was not primarily political but religious in character.

Many students of the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation, while recognizing the religious nature of the Protestant Revolt,

have not been aware that, above all, the movement inaugurated by Martin Luther was a hermeneutical revolution of the first magnitude. Luther's ultimate break with Rome was made possible by the discovery of principles of interpretation, which were either forgotten or unknown to the Medieval Church. Only as these new principles were found and applied, was it possible for Luther to direct the attention of European Christianity to the teachings of Christ and His Apostles. Luther's principles of interpretation were responsible for a true Biblical conception of Christianity. Thus Holl asserted concerning this matter:

The battle with the Roman Catholic Church, which Luther initiated with the nailing of the theses, developed at the same time into a battle concerning the understanding of the Bible. Luther could not complete it without developing his principles of interpretation.³

Luther's accomplishments in the field of Biblical hermeneutics have frequently not been properly and adequately appreciated. It is, of course, not surprising to find Roman Catholic scholars failing to understand, or ignoring, the Wittenberg Reformer's significance in the area of Biblical hermeneutics. Rome has denounced Luther's influence on Biblical interpretation as negative and harmful. Thus Monsignor Patrick O'Hara, in his book *The Facts About Luther*, portrayed the latter as a perverter of Scriptures and accused Luther of adopting erroneous principles of Scriptural interpretation which prevented those using Luther's translation of the German Bible from obtaining a correct understanding of the sure knowledge of God and His revelation, as it is in Christ and His Church.⁴ The same Roman Catholic prelate further claimed that Lutheran hermeneutical principles paved the way for rationalism and for modern infidelity. With these strictures Professor Adam also agreed.⁵ Father O'Brien, one of the current apologists for the Roman Catholic faith, asserted that "Luther constituted himself the authoritative interpreter of the Bible, and practically claimed for himself infallibility."⁶ Father Cornely described Luther's contribution to hermeneutical science and exegesis in these words: *Lutherus (1546) saepe quidem contra SS. Patrum interpretationem verbis contumeliosis loquitur, sed in Commentariis nihil invenitur, quod perfectum notet; . . .*⁷ Luther's translation

of the Bible into German, to which he devoted twelve years of his life and which represented a great achievement theologically and linguistically, is disposed of by Clayton in his life of Luther in one sentence, claiming it made the people dissatisfied with their old religion and its spiritual head, the Pope.⁸

While in contrast to these opinions one finds Protestant writers totally dissenting from the judgments of Roman Catholic scholarship regarding Luther's contribution to hermeneutical science and Biblical interpretation, it nevertheless will be found that even among Protestant scholars his stature as an interpreter of the Bible has not been adequately apprehended. Thus Terry, in his historical sketch of the various schools of interpretation, does not sufficiently appreciate the contribution of Luther's hermeneutical achievements.⁹ That Gilbert did not appreciate the contribution of Luther's hermeneutical revolution may be seen from the following statement:

His (i.e., Luther's) exposition does mark progress as compared with that of the medieval period, notably in its good sense and practical character, but the best, most original elements in his views are found throughout his writings as *almost wholly un-applied truths*.¹⁰

In the light of these false allegations made by Roman Catholic scholars and the failure of many Protestant scholars truly to understand Luther's contribution to the science of Biblical hermeneutics and its significance in the formative stage of the Reformation, a portrayal of Luther's achievements as Biblical hermeneut is herewith presented.¹¹

II

Two factors prepared the way for the discovery of those important hermeneutical principles by Luther which were to have an extensive and controlling influence in reforming the Church of the sixteenth century. The first was the philosophical system of Occam, who as nominalist taught that reason was intended to be used in apprehending the truths of nature, philosophy, and science. According to Occam there was an unbridgeable gap between reason and faith.¹² This was radically different from the view held by St. Thomas, who taught that one could reason his way through natural theology (philosophy) to revealed truth (faith). The Thomistic system had accorded Aristotle an authorita-

tive place in Christian theology. Occam opposed the medieval position of the Church by drastically separating reason and faith. He maintained that in theology whatever the Christian knew was the result of divine revelation and not the product of man's reasoning or philosophizing. The Occamists, therefore, centered authority for theological dogmas in the Bible. Much of Luther's philosophical training had been in the school of Occam, called the *Via Moderna*. Luther's philosophical training may thus have been a contributing factor in his development as a student and interpreter of the Bible.

The second factor which prepared Luther for his revolutionary attitudes over against the hermeneutical system of the Church in which he had been nourished was the movement known as "Biblical Humanism." This movement supplied Luther with the tools that he and other scholars needed to rebuild the Christian Church. In 1509 the French Humanist Lefèvre d'Etaples published his *Psalterium Quintuplex*, an edition that supplied the Biblical student with a textual basis for exegetical lectures and at the same time also furnished an up-to-date commentary on the Psalms. In it Lefèvre censured those who trusted human merit and also weighed critically the sacramental system. This work with its emphasis on the grace of God gave a strong impetus to Bible reading, and Luther used it as a guide in his first Psalm lectures at Wittenberg, in 1512—1513. When Erasmus issued the New Testament in Greek, Luther at once procured a copy of it for his lectures on Romans. The second edition of Erasmus' Greek New Testament, issued in 1519, was employed by Luther at the Wartburg in 1521 and 1522 as the basis for his translation of the New Testament and the foundation for his reforms. A European scholar made the following judgment concerning the importance of the publications of Erasmus' New Testament:

There can be no doubt but that something great and new had happened, which declared war on Scholasticism and occasioned its fall; for Christianity was taken back more than a thousand years to the very time of the first expositors of the New Testament, yes, even to the building of the canon itself.¹³

What Erasmus did for the New Testament, John Reuchlin accomplished for the Old Testament. The latter's *De Rudimentis Hebraicis*, a combined grammar and dictionary, was used by Lu-

ther and other reformers. The works of Erasmus and Reuchlin provided a new and scientific approach to the Scriptures.

In 1514, Luther undertook the study of Greek seriously, being aided by John Lang's knowledge of Greek and his extensive library of the classics. When in 1516 Luther started to use Erasmus' New Testament, he was still a novice in Greek, but by 1517 and 1518 his knowledge of Greek and Hebrew had greatly increased. By 1520, Luther had developed into an able linguist. Gilbert expressed the opinion that although Luther's knowledge of Greek and Hebrew was considerable for his day, it "was not sufficient to give a distinctively linguistic value to his exegetical work."¹⁴ However, in Schwiebert's opinion, Luther's translation of the Greek New Testament into German in 1522 and his complete translation of the Bible in 1534 was the work of a mature scholar and able linguist.¹⁵

By employing the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament, Luther must be credited with placing Biblical interpretation on a sound foundation by demanding that the original text of the Bible be used in Biblical interpretation. In Luther's day the Vulgate was considered the authoritative text for exposition and interpretation. The Council of Trent declared the Vulgate the authentic text of the Church. By the term "authentic" the formulators of this position at Trent meant that the Latin translation is trustworthy and that its testimony cannot be rejected in public lectures or disputations.¹⁶ The Vatican Council (1870) reaffirmed this position by declaring the Latin Vulgate to be the official version of the Church and as such to be held as authentic in public readings, discourses, and disputes.¹⁷ While Roman Catholic scholars admit that the Vulgate is not free from errors¹⁸ and inferior to the Greek and Hebrew, yet the Roman Catholic Church has directed its teaching personnel to take the Vulgate as the fountain for all transactions of the Church, sermons, catechizing, and discussions. Even though Roman Catholic exegetes may use the original texts, the Scriptures written in Hebrew, Biblical Aramaic, and Greek, they are required to consult the Vulgate. Humphry, a Jesuit, in his volume *The Written Word*, wrote: "The Greek and Hebrew texts are of the greatest value, as means in order to arrive at the genuine full sense and full force of many passages in the Latin Vulgate."¹⁹

III

Despite the aid that Occamism and Biblical Humanism furnished Luther, it would be difficult to establish that they were directly responsible for the discovery of one of the basic principles of all sound interpretation: *Sensus literalis unus est*.

When Luther began his exegetical lectures at the University of Wittenberg in 1512, he followed the accepted methodology of his day, namely, of attributing a fourfold meaning (*Quadrigena*) to a text: the literal, the allegorical, the tropological, and the anagogical. As the student follows the Biblical lectures of the Wittenberg Reformer between 1512 and 1517, he notes how Luther gradually broke with the allegorical method. In his Lectures on *Romans*, delivered from November 3, 1512, to September, 1516, Luther expounded the text of this Pauline writing according to the grammatico-historical method, while his interpretation was almost entirely spiritual. Allegory was no longer employed in the interpretation of the spiritual text. In the lectures on Galatians, given from October 27, 1516, to March 10, 1517, Luther utilized only the grammatico-historical method. Thus, as Hamel has pointed out, there was severed one of the significant bonds that linked Luther with the past.²⁰ After 1517 the bonds of the allegorical method were completely broken. In the exposition on *The Ten Commandments* Luther referred to the fourfold sense of the Scriptures as a "sport for children." Henceforth the text of Scripture had but one meaning for him, even though in his practical explanations Luther often paid tribute to the allegorical sense. Thus in writing to Emser, Luther asserted: "Scripture shall not have a double meaning, but shall retain the one that accords with the meaning by the words."²¹ Again he said: "The Holy Ghost is the most simple Author and Speaker in heaven or earth, therefore His words cannot have more than one, the most simple, meaning."²² In the Christmas Postil for 1522 Luther wrote: "If we concede that Scripture has more than one sense, it loses its fighting force."²³

The abandonment of the allegorical method of exegesis by Luther and the use of the historico-grammatical method was an accomplishment whose influence dare not be underestimated. Of it Fuller-ton said: "For the first time in the history of the Church a really scientific principle of exegesis is enunciated as the controlling

principle in interpretation." ²⁴ Ever since the second century the exegesis of Scripture had been dominated by a double meaning: the literal and the figurative. The latter in turn was designated by various names and was further subdivided, so that in the course of time it became customary to interpret Scripture, as has already been mentioned, in a fourfold way. Sometimes medieval exegetes found as many as seven different meanings in the Bible. ²⁵ A little verse in circulation as late as the sixteenth century illustrates the fourfold sense:

*Littera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria,
Moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia.*

(The letter shows us what God and our fathers did;
The allegory shows us where our faith is hid;
The moral meaning gives us rules of daily life;
The anagogy shows us where we end our strife.) ²⁶

An example of the use of these senses of Scripture may be obtained from the interpretation of "Jerusalem" in Gal. 4:22 ff. Historically it refers to the city of the Jews; allegorically it means the Church of Christ; anagogically it signifies the heavenly city, and tropologically it refers to the human soul.

The allegorical method had risen among the Greeks of Alexandria and was applied by the Jews of Alexandria. Pantaeus, the founder of the Alexandrian School, adopted it from Philo; and subsequently his successors in Alexandria, Clement and Origen, continued it. From the time of the Alexandrian School until the days of Luther, the allegorical method was the predominant manner of Scriptural interpretation. The great weakness and deficiency of this method was its obscuration of the true meaning of Scripture. Mixed hopelessly with the allegorical method was an exaggerated typical interpretation. The allegorical methodology allowed the imagination of the interpreter to run wild so that the Bible becomes putty in the hands of the interpreter. Luther protested that his antagonists treat the Scriptures as if they were a nose of wax, to be pulled about at will. It was possible for different doctrinal systems to originate by the use of the allegorical method, yet there was nothing within the method to distinguish the true from the false. Only by a return to the literal method could the subjectivity and misconception which had characterized the history of Biblical

interpretation be removed. According to Bornkamm, Luther was especially opposed to the allegorical method because it destroyed the historical character of the books of the Old Testament.²⁷ For Luther the history of the Old Covenant was *Heilsgeschichte*; it contained the history of salvation. His fundamental understanding of Old Testament history was governed by the principle: *Ex historia aedificanda est fides*. The historical nature of the Old Testament can be established only by the adoption of the literal sense.

Nicholas of Lyra, whom Luther followed in the early years of his interpretative work, had realized the fallacies of the allegorical method and stressed the acceptance of the literal meaning. Lyra, however, did not totally succeed in freeing himself from the bondage of the allegorical method. Roman Catholic scholars presume to credit the return of Biblical interpretation to the literal method to Nicholas of Lyra. The emphasis on the historico-grammatical method in Biblical interpretation was new for the humanism of Luther's time. Only a half year before the Leipzig debate there appeared the *Methodus* of Erasmus, in which the latter praised the allegorical method of Origen. When Luther embarked upon his exegetical lectures at Wittenberg University, the fourfold sense of Scripture was dominant, as is evident from a perusal of the *Manuale Curatorum* of Ulrich Surgant (appeared in 1502) and the *Tractatus de modo praedicandi* of Dungersheim (appeared in 1514). The Roman Catholic Church has always welcomed the use of the fourfold sense of Scripture, because this method of interpretation permits the justification of any doctrine whatsoever from either the Old or the New Testament. Luther, however, must be credited with initiating a new *modus operandi* in the history of Biblical interpretation, one which has influenced Scriptural exposition to the present time. A survey of the exegetical works of the sixteenth century reveals the fact that both Protestant and Roman Catholic exegetes followed Luther's lead in making the historico-grammatical method the controlling principle of Scriptural exposition. As a result of Luther's employment of, and emphasis upon, this hermeneutical rule, the Council of Trent and Roman exegesis in the sixteenth century and subsequent centuries were compelled to reckon with it.

Although Luther forced the recognition of the literal sense as

a fundamental law of Scriptural interpretation, the Roman Catholic Church to this day has refused to reject the use of allegory. Thus Seisenberger wrote "that the meaning of the text must not everywhere be limited to the literal meaning, as underlying the letter many a mystery is often concealed. There is, therefore, more than one meaning of the written word."²⁸ Gigot justified the use of the allegorical method by the Church Fathers on the ground that the authors of the New Testament admitted the existence of a typical sense in various books of the Old Testament.²⁹ Contrary to any New Testament warrant or support he contended for the existence of a typical sense in connection with persons and events spoken of in the writings of the New Testament. Gigot asserted:

It is true that the New Testament dispensation is the fulfillment of that of the Old Testament, and is final from the standpoint of Revelation; yet it does not seem improbable that, in some other way, it may symbolize and prefigure events in the life of the Church through the centuries.³⁰

In a footnote he illustrated this method of interpretation: Martha and Mary typify the active and contemplative life, the bark of Peter on the sea is an image of the Church under persecution.

The rejection of the fourfold sense of Scripture and its inevitable consequence of mysticism led Luther to the discovery of the theological doctrine of justification by faith under circumstances that have become the subject of much research within recent years.

The translators and exegetes of the Middle Ages had not known nor applied the hermeneutical principle that the Scripture has but one meaning. As a consequence the Bible had remained a closed book as a guide to salvation. The finding of the true meaning of the Biblical phrase "righteousness of God" in Rom. 1:17 (*iustitia Dei*) became the key by which Luther was able correctly to set forth the heart of the Bible. Saarnivaara believes that Luther's discovery of the true meaning of Rom. 1:17 — generally known as the "tower experience" — occurred toward the end of 1518 and not between 1513 and 1515, as generally believed by many Luther scholars.³¹

Prior to 1518 Luther held, and gave expression to, the Augustinian view of justification. The great fourth-century Church Father taught that man is justified and saved by faith and not by

works, but this justification was portrayed as a gradual renewal or healing of man's human nature from the corruption of sin. Non-imputation of sins for the sake of Christ was considered by Augustine a temporary supplement to this process of healing. Between 1512 and 1518 Luther held the ethical and moral concept of justification, and not the forensic. According to the *Preface* to his works, written in 1545, Luther ascribed the interim between his lectures on Hebrews (completed in the spring of 1518) and his second series of lectures on the Psalms (started in the beginning of 1519) as the time during which he discovered the true meaning of justification by faith, namely, that by the gracious declaration of God, man is declared righteous. Now for the first time Luther realized that God justified the sinner by mercifully imputing or reckoning the obedience of Jesus to the sinner as his righteousness, thereby forgiving him his sins for Christ's sake.

While Luther's new insight into the doctrine of justification, with its concomitant correct understanding of the relationship of justification and sanctification, was a religious experience of great importance for Luther's personal faith, its significance extended beyond this. Luther's new understanding was above all the discovery of the meaning of the Word concerning justification. His "tower experience" was the recovery by Luther of the Scriptural way of salvation. The crucial point in the discovery of the Scriptural teaching of justification by faith was the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the account of the sinner. Thus Saarnivaara described the meaning of Luther's find:

The entire content of his discovery in the tower was the insight that, according to the simple and literal meaning of this written Word of God, man is justified by the gracious imputation of God when by faith he appropriates the Gospel promise of forgiveness of sins in the blood of Christ.³²

From another point of view the discovery of the full Reformation insight of justification meant also the "Lutheran" distinction between Law and Gospel. The proper differentiation between Law and Gospel, a cardinal point of Lutheran theology and teaching, was of greatest importance in the comprehension of the meaning of the Bible. The Augustinian-Catholic doctrine of justification was a confusion of Law and Gospel. According to that doctrine

"Christ differed from Moses only in time and in perfection." Neither the Pope nor all his learned men and universities, Luther declared, had ever taken into consideration the art of distinguishing between Law and Gospel. In fact, outside of Holy Scriptures no book had been written which had rightfully differentiated between them. A correct interpretation of the Word of God rests on the recognition of these two principal constituent elements of the Bible.

The distinction between Law and Gospel also has implications for the interpretation of the Old Testament. Luther found Law and Gospel in both Testaments of the Bible. Thus Luther asserted concerning the presence of Law and Gospel in the Old Testament:

But in the New Testament there are given, along with the teaching about grace, many other teachings that are laws and commandments for the ruling of the flesh, since in this life the spirit is not perfected and grace alone cannot rule. Just so in the Old Testament there are, besides the laws, certain promises and offers of grace, by which the holy fathers and prophets, under law, were kept, like us, under the faith of Christ.⁸³

IV

The further development in Luther's life between 1518 and 1521 found him arriving at a hermeneutical principle which has become a cornerstone in Biblical interpretation, namely, the Scripture is its own interpreter and hence alone has the authority to determine doctrine and life. While the Occamists emphasized the authority of Scripture more strongly than any other school of theology in the Roman Catholic Church, they nevertheless recognized the Church, functioning through a General Council, as the final court of appeal in the determination of doctrine. That Luther shared this view till 1518 is evident from his appeal to a General Church Council, which he made after his meeting with Cardinal Cajetan, thereby eliminating the Pope as authority apart from and above Scripture. Luther's disputation with Eck in 1519 led further to the rejection of the authority of Church Councils and to the assertion by Luther that history had shown Church Councils to have erred. In speaking of the unjust condemnation of certain evangelical articles by the Council of Constance, Luther said:

A faithful Christian cannot be forced beyond the Holy Scriptures, which are really the divine law (*jus divinum*), unless a new and authentic revelation is added; indeed, we are prohibited by the divine law from believing something that is not proved by the divine Writing or clear revelation.³⁴

At this time Luther made the following pronouncement as to the authority of Scripture: "The statement of all writings (sc. of the Fathers) must be judged according to the divine Writ, whose authority is greater than the powers of perception of the entire human race."³⁵ In regard to the Church as interpreter, Luther asserted: "The Church also has no power to establish new divine promises of grace, as some foolishly speak, that everything which the Church ordains is of no lesser authority than that which is ordained of God, since she is guided by the Holy Spirit. For the Church comes into being through the Word of promise through faith. . . . God's Word stands incomparably high above the Church; in this Word she, as a creature, cannot resolve, order, or execute, but can only be resolved, ordered, and carried out. For who generates his father, who has first called his Creator into being?"³⁶ In his *Assertio omnium Articulorum*, issued in January, 1521, Luther averred that he most surely would not permit himself to be forced by the authority of any St. Peter, however great it may be, unless it is confirmed by the judgment of the divine Scripture.³⁷ In an extensive statement, Luther also explained that the Fathers could not bind him in his interpretation of Holy Writ. "Scripture is the *primum principium*; it is in itself the most certain, the most accessible, the most readily understandable (book), which interprets itself and approves, judges, and illumines all (words) of all."³⁸ On March 29, 1521, Luther designated the Holy Ghost as the most lucid Writer, whose writings do not need the help of church and tradition to be understood correctly, if they are taken in their literal meaning.³⁹ Scripture, for Luther, was not one of several pillars upon which the house of faith rested; no, it was the sole foundation. The Church was no longer considered the arbiter of Scripture, but Scripture was the judge of the Church. In declaring the Holy Writings the only source and norm for doctrine, Luther returned to the very teaching of Christ, who said: "If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and

ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31, 32).

At the Council of Trent the position of Luther was condemned in the disciplinary decree *Insuper*, which states: "No one . . . shall presume to interpret Sacred Scriptures contrary to the sense which Holy Mother the Church held and holds, to whom it belongs to judge the true sense and interpretation of Holy Scripture."⁴⁰ Steinmueller gives two practical rules to be followed by interpreters obedient to the decisions of the Roman Catholic Church: 1. The sense proposed by the Church must be considered authentic. Thus John 20:20ff. refers to the Sacrament of Penance; James 5:14ff. meant the Sacrament of Extreme Unction; Matt. 16:13ff. and John 21:15ff. a promise of the primacy of Peter. 2. Even though the Church has not officially interpreted a text, when a meaning has been proposed for a given passage, it is the duty of the interpreter to accept the traditional explanation.⁴¹

In regard to the authority of the Church Fathers, rejected by Luther, the Vatican Council asserted: "It is not lawful for the exegete to interpret contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers," which means, the interpretation which the Fathers either received or rejected must likewise be received or rejected. Thus Mal. 1:10 must be accepted as a prophecy of the Eucharist; 1 Cor. 4:7 refers to the gratuity of divine election and of supernatural gifts.⁴²

In contrast to the Church of his day, Luther taught the perspicuity, or *Allgemeinverständlichkeit*, of the Word of God. "There is not on earth a book more lucidly written than Holy Scripture," Luther declared.⁴³ Consequently the individual Christian is not dependent on the Church for its interpretation of the meaning and doctrines of Holy Writ. Luther did not deny the existence of difficulties in Scripture, for he often quoted the remark of Gregory that the Bible is "a river in which a lamb may wade and the elephant must swim." He contended for the perspicuity of the Scriptures in the chief matters of salvation, especially as it pertained to Law and Gospel. The dark words of the Word must be explained with the help of the clear words of the Bible. It was Luther's contention that the Bible could be understood in terms of itself — *sacra*

Scriptura sui ipsius interpres — with no Patristic commentary necessary. As a corollary to this truth, the maxim was deduced that a document must be given opportunity to speak for itself, a writing must be interpreted in the light of its own statements.

By insisting on the right of the text of Scripture, as literally interpreted, to stand alone, Luther made a valuable contribution to the science of Protestant hermeneutics. In adopting this principle of interpretation, he departed radically from the overwhelming majority of medieval exegetes. The exegetical method which obtained when Luther embarked on his Biblical lectures on the Psalms in 1512, was for the interpreter to present the exegetical materials of the past in the form of a *catena*, a chain of explanation gathered together from the Patristic commentaries. A number of such *catenae* existed in Luther's day, and they borrowed largely from Augustine, Hilary, Jerome, and the Greek Fathers. When Luther began his First Psalm Lectures, he relied particularly on Augustine's *Commentary of the Psalms*, Lyra's *Commentary on the Psalms*, and Lefèvre's *Psalterium Quintuplex*. In the beginning of the Psalm Lectures, Luther followed the required exegetical method of presenting the thoughts and explanations of approved expositors; however, beginning with Psalm 90, Luther gave his own explanation, with Patristic quotations much fewer in number. Gradually Luther dispensed with the use of the Church Fathers' explanation and insisted that the text be allowed to speak for itself.

V

From the hermeneutical rule that the Bible is its own interpreter derives another cherished principle of the Reformation, namely, that each believer, as he lets Scripture interpret Scripture, has the privilege and duty to examine and judge doctrine. "To ascertain and judge about doctrine pertains to all and to every Christian; and in such a way that let him be anathema who injures their right by a single hair."⁴⁴

This right of private judgment has been denounced by Roman Catholics as the cause for modern individualism and the divisiveness of modern civilization. The celebrated neo-Thomist Jacques Maritain, in his *Three Reformers*, grouped Luther with Descartes and Rousseau and claimed that the religious subjectivism of Luther,

the philosophical subjectivism of Descartes, and the social subjectivism of Rousseau were woven of one cloth.⁴⁵ The Roman Catholic Church historian Joseph Lortz has accused Luther's principle of private judgment in interpretation as responsible for the rejection of the idea of authority in the sphere of religion.⁴⁶ However, the facts do not support this allegation. Luther's quarrel with Rome was not so much about the idea of the necessity of having authority in religion as about the seat of religious authority. Thus Beard asserted: "The debate with the Catholics was not as to whether Scripture was authoritative, but whether tradition and the Church were to be admitted to an equal position of influence. . . ." ⁴⁷ In the final analysis it was a question of the authority of Scripture. According to the clear teaching of the Bible, the seat for religious authority was to be found in the Scriptures themselves; in other words, the Scriptures were self-authenticating. Luther certainly believed in religious authority, and he ascribed to the Bible the supreme authority in religious matters. Throughout the latter part of his life, Luther fought a battle on two fronts: on the one side he warred against the tyranny of the Pope, and on the other side against the religious arbitrariness of the *Schwärmer*, or the sectarians. Pauck described the position of Luther on religious authority as:

... that of a theonomous Biblicism, i.e., in the Bible he found the Word of God by faith in which God could become *his* God. Thus he overcame a heteronomous objectivism which excludes personal commitment, as well as an autonomous subjectivism which disregards super-personal authority.⁴⁸

Did Luther accept human reason as an authority on a par with Scripture, or even above it? Harnack has made the assertion: "The Reformation protested against all formal, external authority in matters of religion. . . . Thus Luther also protested against the authority of the letter of the Bible." ⁴⁹ Luther's statement at Worms: "Unless I am convinced by testimony from Scripture or evident reason," has been interpreted by some as demanding unrestricted liberty of thought and conscience and as defending the position that the only authority to which man was responsible was his own subjective and arbitrary conscience. However, it has been shown by Preuss that Luther's word "or evident reason" means: unless

I am convinced from Scripture or through logically correct deductions from Holy Writ, I will not change my position. Only ten days after his confession at Worms, Luther wrote to the Emperor Charles as follows:

For God, the Searcher of hearts, is my Witness that I am most ready to submit to and obey your Majesty either in life or in death, to glory or to shame, for gain or for loss. As I have offered myself, thus I do now, *excepting nothing save the Word of God*, in which not only (as Christ teaches in Matthew 4) does man live, but which also the angels of Christ desire to see (1 Peter 1). *As it is above all things, it ought to be held free and unbound in all*, as Paul teaches (2 Tim. 2:9). *It ought not to depend on human judgment nor to yield to the opinion of men, no matter how great, how numerous, how learned, and how holy they are.*⁵⁰

Luther allowed reason to serve as a handmaiden to theology in order to find out the meaning of the original text of the Scriptures or to rectify human errors in the original texts. However, Luther condemns that reason which tries to be wiser than the Word of God, or as wise as the Word of God, or which wants to be an authority criticizing the teachings of the Scriptures.

VI

As an important aid in determining the interpretation of the more difficult passages of the Bible, Luther stressed the "analogy of faith." His emphasis on the single meaning of Scripture was associated with the rule that a single passage was not to be torn out of its own context, out of its larger context, nor out of its organic connection with the entire Word of God. Thus in his debate with Eck at Leipzig, Luther asserted: "The understanding of a statement of Scripture must be sought in the entirety of Scripture, and in the sum total of all related facts."⁵¹ Again he said:

That is not the right way to interpret the Scriptures, to collect statements from different parts of the Bible without any regard for logical order or context. But that is the way it is commonly done; and it leads to nothing but errors. In order not to go wrong, the theologian must therefore keep in mind the whole of Scripture *et contraria contrariis conferre et sicut duo Cherubim adversis cultibus utriusque diversitatis consensum in medio propitiatorii invenire.*⁵²

It must be borne in mind that Luther had a different conception about the analogy of faith from that held by the Church. The Early Fathers of the Church, when they spoke of the *analogia fidei*, meant the general principles of faith, of which there were a number of summaries available. Analogy of faith was a term which in the course of time was applied to the creeds of the Church. The Nicene Creed was made a standard of judgment. Traditions of the Church were elevated to the same height, thus creating the ridiculous situation of making that which was taken from the Bible, the standard according to which Holy Writ was to be tested.⁵³ The analogy of faith, according to Luther, is to be found in the Word of God itself. Mackinnon has asserted that the use of the analogy of faith, however, was the Lutheran equivalent of the allegorical method, i.e., the explanation of the text in the light of, or in accordance with, the dictates of the Christian faith. He averred: "In reality he (i.e., Luther) only discarded this method to revive and apply it in another form, and its application might and did lead to results as arbitrary as those deprecated and denounced in the case of the Fathers and Schoolmen."⁵⁴ While it is true that Luther was not always consistent in the use of the analogy of faith, it is erroneous to identify the analogy of faith with the allegorical method. Preserved Smith also considered the employment of the analogy of faith a hindrance to sound interpretation, when he wrote: "The fundamental assumption that the sense of Scripture is one and that obscure sentences must be interpreted by those that are clear—by the analogy of faith as the phrase was—put bonds upon the expositor."⁵⁵ Modern liberal theologians, who have rejected the belief of the inerrancy of the Word of God and its authority, cannot appreciate the analogy of faith, a rule of interpretation accepted by all who regard the Bible as the inspired Word of the living God.

VII

An important contribution by Luther to sound hermeneutics was his Christological approach to the interpretation of the whole Bible. Luther considered the Old and New Testaments as a unit, whose oneness was to be found in Christ Crucified. Already in his first Psalm lectures, Luther said: "I see nothing in Scripture

but Christ Crucified." In a sermon delivered on November 11, 1515, he asserted:

He who would read the Bible must simply take heed he does not err, for the Scripture may permit itself to be stretched and led, but let no one lead it according to his affects, but let him lead it to the source, i. e., the cross of Christ. Then he will surely strike the center; . . .⁵⁶

The concept that Christ could be found in the Old Testament was not new, for Erasmus had already stated: "Nothing is to be sought in Scripture but Christ." Erasmus, however, considered Christ the Center because He was the best model for the moral life. In contrast to this viewpoint, Christ is the Center because He is the crucified, risen and ascended One, through whom forgiveness, righteousness, and eternal life are bestowed upon men devoid of merit. The Christo-centric rule of interpretation was paramount in all of Luther's interpretations of Scripture, whether in the Old or in the New Testament. Luther believed that the Gospels describe the life of Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament; the Apostles portray the teaching of the Apostolic Church as the true interpretation of the Old Testament. "Christ is the point in the circle from which the whole circle (of the Scripture) is drawn. . . ." "If you will interpret well and surely, then take Christ with you, for He is the Man whom the whole of (Scripture) concerns."⁵⁷

By Luther's emphasis on a Christological interpretation of Scripture he has been understood to have introduced a subjective element into his evaluation of Scripture: only those portions of Scripture are divine and inspired which are concerned with Christ. The statement of Luther: "This is the true touchstone by which all books are to be judged, when one sees whether they urge Christ or not, as all Scripture shows forth Christ, and St. Paul will know no one but Christ (1 Cor. 2:2)," has been construed as introducing a principle of selection of inspired material in the Bible.⁵⁸ But as Kramm has pointed out, that is a misunderstanding of Luther, who considered all canonical books as referring to Christ.⁵⁹ While modern higher criticism has rejected the Christo-centric interpretation of the Old Testament, Luther, it must be recognized, accepted the interpretation of Christ and the Apostles, which clearly portrayed the Old Testament as speaking and prophesying about the Messiah.

The account of Creation, the lives of the Patriarchs, the ceremonial laws of the Jews, and the narrative of Jonah, all referred to in the New Testament as having an important bearing on God's divine revelation, were cited by Christ and the Apostles in relation to the divine plan of redemption. It was from this viewpoint that Luther designated Genesis "almost an evangelical book." When the Wittenberg Reformer found the doctrine of the Trinity or the teaching of the first and second Adam in Genesis, or the portrayal of Abraham as a believer of justification by faith, Luther was merely following St. Paul. The Epistle to the Hebrews also furnished Luther with further warrant for his Christo-centric interpretation of the Old Testament. The principle "as far as it concerns Christ" must, therefore, not be considered a principle of selection, but one of interpretation.

The purpose of this essay was to set forth some of Luther's hermeneutical principles and thus to show how much the Lutheran Reformation owes to Luther's discovery of certain basic principles of interpretation. Farrar sums up our findings when he says: "And he not only gave them the open Bible, but taught them and all the world how best it might be interpreted."⁶⁰

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FOOTNOTES

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37. *Ibid.*, 7, 133, 33ff.
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The Great Physician

By FREDERIC NIEDNER

WHEN God made man, He used the humblest material and made a supreme creature. Great artists have dipped their brushes into pigments and have painted upon canvas figures that seemed to live. God took the dust of the ground and made of it a body that really lived. And when the Creator had breathed into this body's nostrils the breath of life, man became a living soul. This man's body was fearfully and wonderfully made, perfect in its form and consummate in its functions. Man was possessed of health from head to foot, in mind and body. There was no inherited susceptibility to disease; there were no weak organs open to the attack of germs; there were no nervous disorders to wreck the happiness of man's life. But after the entrance of sin into the world, death appeared upon the mundane scene, and death had as its frequent precursor and cause the many illnesses that it became the lot of man to bear and under which he had to suffer. As we page through the record of humanity as portrayed in the Bible, we find mention of many illnesses known to men: boils and fever, palsy and leprosy, dropsy and dysentery, ague and itch, epilepsy and emerods, besides blindness, deafness, lameness, and other infirmities of the human frame. For the treatment of disease there were physicians and medicaments, though there was not much to expect of either, as evidenced by the note in 2 Chronicles 16, where "King Asa was diseased in his feet until his disease was exceeding great; yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians; and Asa slept with his fathers." Remedies for diseases were a lump of figs as a potent poultice for boils, ointments for bruises, oil and wine for wounds, wine for the stomach, and anointing with oil for various ailments. But most of the pains and distresses of the human body eluded the skill of physicians and defied the potency of remedies. Yet there was One, the Great Physician, who was Master of all the diseases of mankind, because He was the all-knowing and all-powerful Son of God, who came to this world of sickness to heal and to help.

In a day long before doctors knew that a solution of nitrate of

silver dropped into the eyes of a newborn infant would prevent *ophthalmia neonatorum*, Jesus gave the man who was born blind his sight. In a day long before the world knew anything about leper colonies and the use of chaulmoogra oil, Jesus cured men of the dreadful plague of leprosy. In a day long before men knew anything about diathermy Jesus said to the man sick of the palsy, "Take up thy bed and walk." Jesus was the Great Physician for the illness of humanity. The blind, the lame, the halt, the palsied, the deaf, the dumb, the lepers, the insane, all were brought to the Great Physician. He healed so many of them that if they were all written in a book, the world would not be large enough to contain it, in the hyperbolic statement of the writer of the Fourth Gospel.

Jesus is still the Great Physician for human ailments. No longer does He walk on the streets of cities and along the roads of the countryside, uttering healing words to afflicted men and women. But He is just as near to the sick today as He was in the day when He was in Capernaum. Jesus has promised to hear the prayers of the sick, and His promises do not fail. Many a devout Christian can testify that his earnest and fervent prayers availed much when he was in the misery of great illness. There have been men and women of whose recovery and life the best of physicians despaired and who attributed an unexpected recovery to the power of their prayer to the Great Physician. Many a faithful pastor, who really prayed as a man of God at the bedside of sick members of his flock, can testify to the power of Jesus that can be called on in the day of trouble. The pastor should make himself a bold and fervent man of prayer when he visits his sick people. He has the Doctor with him, at his beck and call. He can bring something to the sickbed that isn't found in the pharmacopoeia of the apothecary nor in the instrument bag of the surgeon. He can bring the Great Physician into the sickroom. Let the pastor be bold and fervent in his application to the Great Physician. Martin Luther was, in his prayer for Melancthon, when he told the Great Physician in very definite language how much his valued co-worker was needed. The pastor may carry a prayer book with him to use in calling for the help of the Great Physician, or he may use the *Gebetsschatz*

or Starck's Prayer Book or the *Hymnal* which he will often find near the bed of his sick members. Or the pastor may have, by much experience and much reading, learned the language of fervent prayer and may be able to pour out words which will assure the afflicted member that the Great Physician is truly near and will reach out His helping hand. Much has been said and written about the "Pastor at the Bedside" of sick members of his flock, about the pastor's personal preparation for this important task, about the manner of his approach to the patient, about the cheerfulness of his demeanor, about the tact that he must employ, about the length and frequency of his visits, and the subject matter of conversation that is carried on at the bedside. Above all, the pastor who ministers to the sick must perform the one greatest service to the sufferer—he must bring Jesus, the Great Physician, to his bedside. The power of Jesus will be present with the ministry of the pastor. Every sick Christian can pray to God himself and ask for healing; the Apostle Peter tells sick Christians to do this, but also to call for the pastor, the elder, of the church, to pray over him, and promises a great blessing as a result of that prayer.

The presence of the Great Physician is especially needed when the illness is not one of the physical body, of eyes and ears, legs and arms, stomach and heart, but when it is an illness of the mind, in cases of melancholy, despair, and erring conscience, fear, hallucinations, and the like. Uninitiated and inexperienced persons will strive to argue with such people in a vain effort to convince them that their harrowing thoughts and fears are entirely baseless, a futile method of attempted healing, because to the patient these fears and thoughts are so real that no amount of argument serves to dislodge them from the mind, but rather drives them deeper and more firmly into the tortured consciousness. The modern psychiatrist has his thousand questions by which he strives to uncover the hidden spring of the mental malady in some long-forgotten episode of the past and to substitute a new personality for the sick mind. The Christian pastor will do well to possess a knowledge of the working of the abnormal human mind and to be conversant with the methods of modern psychiatry and to employ such techniques as may be suggested by the case before him; but he will always remember that the Great Physician is his best Ally

and Counselor and that the cure of his patient lies in the hands of Jesus. And in very many instances the pastor will find that when a mentally disturbed person can be shown the love of God in Christ Jesus, can be brought to see that sins are all forgiven by a loving God through Christ, can be led to the assurance that he will go to heaven when he dies, a new peace will enter the heart and mind that before was in a furious turmoil. The pastor who visits the homes of the sick, the wards of hospitals and the detention areas of mental institutions, and brings to those to whom he ministers the ministry of Jesus, the Great Physician, he is performing the service to which God sent him, and he is being faithful in his divine office.

But the Great Physician does not specialize on diseases of the human body. He is greatly concerned with the welfare of the human soul. The purpose of His healing ministry is to save the soul. He came to save that which was lost. He came that all who believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. When the man sick of the palsy seemed to need first and above all healing for his afflicted body, Jesus first took care of his afflicted soul. Humanity is spiritually sick. The disease of sin has spread from its first development in Eden to epidemic proportions all over the world. It is a congenital malady with which every child born of father and mother comes into the world. The inoculation of education does not cure the malady. The prophylaxis of legislation does not halt its nefarious progress. But still there is balm in Gilead. There is a remedy for sin. Jesus has it. Jesus, the Great Physician, can heal the malady. By His death on the Cross He has attained a righteousness which will cover and cure sin for all who accept that righteousness by faith.

We who are pastors are continually dealing with sinning people. They come to us to ask for Holy Communion; they come to our services to make confession of their sins; they come to church to hear the comforting words of the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins; they come also to excuse their sins, to explain them away, to deny them. It becomes the duty of the pastor always to bring to sinners the Great Physician, to let Jesus talk to the sinner, to convince the sinner of the gravity of his soul's sickness, to warn the

sinner that the end of the path of his illness is his destruction, but to teach the sinner nevertheless that there is healing, pardon, forgiveness for all his transgressions. For the pastor, every contact with a human being can become a clinical examination and the discovery of a hidden malady. The hour of Communion registration can be a process of putting down names into the Communion book, but it can also be an hour of healing for souls, if the pastor knows how to call the Great Physician into that hour of registration. And there come occasions in the pastor's ministry that a man or woman burdened with a galling conscience comes to him to seek rest and quiet and assurance. It is then that the pastor has the glorious opportunity, not to exercise his own wisdom to alleviate the distress of one sinner, but to call in for consultation the Great Physician Jesus, whose words and spiritual remedies will bring joy and comfort to that aching human heart. Very often it becomes necessary to convince a person that he really has a sickness of the soul. They believe that their soul is well, that they need no remedy, that nothing need be done for them. They are self-righteous and self-satisfied. Jesus had these people in mind when He said, with a touch of irony: "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." When the pastor is confronted with those who believe that they are whole and need no physician, it becomes his duty to bring them the physician for their sick souls. He will diagnose their case correctly and unmistakably by means of the Law of God, but he will be most concerned with bringing the Great Physician to the unrepentant sinner, so that he will see the heinousness and the damnable nature of his sin, since it caused the death of the Son of God. The Law alone will not bring a sinner to repentance. The sinner can be convinced from the Law that he has done the things forbidden in the Law and that he has not done the things that are enjoined in the Law; but that recognition will not automatically make him sorry. His answer could be—yes, so what? But when the sinner is led to see the supreme sacrifice made by Jesus for the sins of the world, he will recognize the enormity of his guilt and will be drawn toward repentance and faith.

The Great Physician also turns His healing power to the world

in which we live. We are living in a world that is sick, a world that is in great pain, a world that is in great misery. God did not make the world that way. God made a world that was healthy and happy, a world that felt no pain, a world that knew no misery. God made a perfect world. When the last one of the eight creating commands had been uttered by the Maker of heaven and earth, a world had been created that had no flaw and no fault and no failing. It was all perfection. It was all very good. In no way at all could it have been made any better. It was an unimprovable world. Evolution could do it no good. There were no upward steps by which the world could, in the course of millions of years, become a better world through the process of organic evolution. A betterment and improvement of species by the survival of the fittest was impossible because all were fit, all were perfect. "All the parts of the universe as we know and see them today were present at the time of creation, but they were in a perfect form. . . . Sun and stars, mountains, animals, and plants were more beautiful, more perfect than they are now. Man's first world was the Garden of Eden, abounding in luscious fruit, with a crystal-clear river to water the garden, and shining gold and glistening gems in abundance to delight the eye and the heart. Man, the chief product of the Creator's art, was in perfect health, strength, and beauty. He was the lord of creation. All that God had made was subject to him. Man was created in the image of God. In the body and mind of man the qualities of God were mirrored. Man was holy and sinless and in possession of a perfect knowledge of God. Nothing disturbed the happiness of this perfect world. Weariness from labor came later, as did weeds and harmful insects. Locks and bolts and bars were not needed, for there was no greed and avarice and covetousness. There was no fornication and adultery, and nakedness aroused no evil desire." (*Die Herrlichkeit dieser und jener Welt*, E. Eckhardt.)

But, alas, this perfect world is no more. It is still a world that has not been doomed and destroyed by a Creator who complained that the earth was filled with violence and who said that He would destroy the earth and that the end of all flesh had come before Him. The world is still a world, but its perfection and purity are gone. It is an unhealthy world, a world that is sick. The whole creation

groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, and not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

One who is sick needs a physician. Our sick world needs a physician. There are those who are desperately sick but who refuse to have any physician. They will not believe that their illness is grave enough to warrant the attention of a physician. Or they do not believe that any physician is able to help them. There are those who believe that the world is not sick enough for the need of a physician. It's a good world, they say; there's nothing much the matter with it. They are blind to fearful crime portrayed by the newspaper, to the dreadful vices revealed by investigators into human conduct, to the alarming pictures of license and lewdness among people drawn on the pages of novels and shown on the screens of the moving picture, to the breakdown of the home, to the flimsiness of the marriage bond, to the insatiable greed that brings about flagrant episodes of dishonesty and plundering among the lowest and the highest in human society—they are blind to all that. It is a good world, and it needs no physician. Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we may be dead.

On the other hand, there are many who would be the physicians of the world. There are many who propose powerful potions of their own concoction to heal all the ills of the world. As these physicians for the world's sickness hang out their spurious shingles, we feel as if we were in the Beaumont Building, where glass door after glass door tells you of the presence of aurists, ophthalmologists, neurologists, roentgenologists, ontologists, dermatologists down to urologists, all ready to cure the ills of humanity until the "cadaverologist" begins his work. For the economic ills of the world each political party has the remedy that will not fail. For the future economic security of the individual the insurance agent, the investment broker, and Dr. Townsend have the right answer. For the pangs of marital unhappiness the successors of Dorothy Dix have the miraculous cure. For vice and crime the legislators have new laws that will effectually curb all unsocial tendencies. For the youth problem there are ramified youth programs, tailored

to the needs of young people and providing them with healthful leisure-time occupations that will engage their energies in wholesome activities. Doctors without end for the illnesses of the world. This sick world needs a Great Physician, and there is *one* Physician for this sick world, Jesus, the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world. In His medical kit there is a potion for each one of the world's ailments. Jesus has the remedy for every ill. He has something for the alleviation of every pain.

If this sick world will submit to the therapy of Christ, then it will be on its way to a better condition of health. And whatever Christian people and Christian pastors do to bring the world to call in the Great Physician for its illness, will be the greatest benefit that man has accomplished for man. Lister and Pasteur gave the world release from the incessant ravages of diseases caused by germs; heroes among scientists have brought humankind relief from the onslaughts of many of life's enemies. But the Great Physician Jesus has the one powerful healing for the world's great ills. And it is our task, the task of the Christian, the task of the pastor, to persuade the world to call in the Great Physician for its ills.

Jesus did not come to this world to change the economic and social structures that men had developed. He came to bring healing of sickness, of life, to individuals. The Savior's ministry of healing was directed to individual people. He never did look over a great assembly of people and declare that all those who had any kind of sickness should forthwith be healed of all their various maladies. Once he healed ten men of leprosy. But he always dealt with individuals. All the stories of healing in the Gospels tell us that. Doubtless there were more people sick among the crowd in the house in Capernaum, but Jesus healed the man who was sick of the palsy. But the Great Physician also attends to the maladies that bring misery to mankind in this world.

At the bottom of much of the pain and travail that exists in the life of men and women and children is the breaking down of the home and home life. The family and the home are the basic units of society. In the normal home, character is formed, virtues are inculcated, warnings are given against misconduct that

are remembered and acted upon for a whole lifetime. But the home has ceased to exercise that function in many instances. It has become a place to eat and sleep, and to do both hurriedly, so one can get away again. There is little time and inclination for true home life. Even the Christian home has become less of an oasis that it should be in this sick world. There are many who recognize this and promote remedies for the unhappy situation; but we know that if we can bring Jesus into a sick home, a cure can be effected. The problem is to get the people in a home to let the Word of Jesus influence them, through family devotions, through friendly conversations about serious matters in life and through prayer. Jesus can be a Physician for a sick home, and it must be our constant endeavor to gain entrance for the Great Physician into the homes upon which we can have an influence. Our homes used to have mottos hanging on the walls — one of them was: *Wo keine Bibel ist im Haus, Da geht der Teufel ein und aus*. The surest way to save the home from destruction is to introduce Jesus to it, who can be the Head of the house, a Guest at every meal, and a silent Listener to every conversation.

The people of various nations are separated by oceans and barriers of language and custom, and time and again there has been bitter war and bloodshed. Our country has had to wage warfare against other nations, and the curse of armed conflict is felt in many different ways. No one wants war, yet it comes. Hatred and greed and lust bring it about. We are helpless against the rising danger of repeated carnage and war. It is like a great disease of the world, that festers continually and again and again breaks out like an erupting boil. The one thing that Christians can do is to continue to preach the love of God in Jesus, to take the place of the hatred that fills and envenoms the human heart.

The world is sick in its morals. In the higher altitudes of crime there is a flood of embezzlement, cheating in financial transactions involving millions of dollars, diversion of public moneys into private pockets, and a veritable Augean stable of reeking dishonesty; and in the lower levels of the common man there is a deplorable obliteration of the sharp line of distinction that separates the property of one from that of another. Dishonesty that is grand and dishonesty that is petty are the order of the day. Most people

have become cheaters. An absolute down-to-the-penny honesty has been called impossible for our day. The world is sick in its financial affairs. Is there any cure? Frantically the writers are pointing to the sickness and few know the remedy. But here, too, the Great Physician has the remedy that will cure, if it is applied to the life of the individual and the life of the nation. The Great Physician who went into the house of the publican Zacchaeus and heard him say that he would disgorge his ill-gotten gains and lead a life of honesty, can be taken into the banks and business houses, into government offices and stores, and He can there exert an influence through His Word that will change the life of a Levi to the life of a Matthew.

The atmosphere which we are breathing is becoming putrid. There is a record of criminality that makes one think of the days of Noe. Last year a crime occurred in Chicago every twelve and a half minutes. Thieves stole \$45,000 a day, the year's total loss by thievery being over sixteen million dollars. And that is Chicago alone. The divorce evil is not abating. The sale of obscene literature kept under the counters or displayed openly to the gaping view of adults and teen-agers is not in retrogression; the flagrant orgies of in chastity that frequently come to light in schools break out again and again; sex crimes scream from the large print of newspapers; these and many, many other symptoms of a destroying spiritual carcinoma are evident to anyone who takes the trouble to count the pulse beat of humanity through observation and study.

Rome calls out loudly and with more insistence and persuasion than ever: The cure for the world's ills lies in a return to the one and only holy religion, that of Rome; despite that fact the greatest malefactors of our day bear names that stamp them clearly as coming from places in the world where Rome has full sway over the lives of the people.

New movements spring up again and again. Today it is the Christophers, whose alleged transformations of human lives and of the world's condition is currently described in the magazine modeled after the *Reader's Digest* and called the *Catholic Digest*. The article has the intriguing title "You Can Still Change the World," and it is the Christopher movement that you must embrace for the metamorphosis.

Physicians and remedies for the world's sickness without end — and yet, there is but One who will help. It is Jesus, the Great Physician. Let it be our purpose to bring the Great Physician into the sickroom of the world. The Gospel of Jesus is the one force that can better the world. A look in faith at Calvary will fill the heart with new resolve for better living, with new spiritual life, with new mental health, with a new purpose in life, and with a new step into the direction of God and of heaven.

St. Charles, Mo.

Thinking Clearly on the RSV

By ARTHUR F. KATT

EVERY new translation of the Holy Bible has met with opposition. "Whenever a translation is made, the question of its authority as over against the authority of the original or of earlier translations naturally arises."¹ This was the experience of St. Jerome back in the 4th and 5th centuries, when he produced the Vulgate. "At first his translation was met with antagonism, and it was even declared to be heretical."² This was true particularly also of our beloved, time-honored King James Version. It took nearly half a century for it to find general acceptance, and quite a bit of the original translators' preface is devoted to its own defense in view of anticipated opposition. There we read: "Zeal to promote the common good, whether it be by devising anything ourselves, or revising that which hath been laboured by others, deserveth certainly much respect and esteem, but yet findeth but cold entertainment in the world. Was there ever anything projected, that savoured any way of newness or renewing, but the same endured many a storm of gainsaying, or opposition?"³ And so it is not to be wondered at that the new RSV is faring little better than its illustrious predecessor. Religious and secular newspapers and journals are full of it. Even a popular weekly magazine like *Look* in its issue of February 10 ran a leading article entitled "The Great Bible Controversy," highlighting particularly "the disputed 'Virgin Passage' from Isaiah 7:14." The criticism evoked by a new version is as such good and commendable. We are made to re-examine prooftexts once taken for granted and to make sure that they really say what we think they mean. Never before during our lifetime has the Virgin Birth been so strenuously defended as at present when it is feared to be endangered. The same applies to Job 19:26,27 and the resurrection of the body and various O. T. Messianic prophecies. That is all to the good, for not until we seem to be losing something do we tighten our grip. In many cases, moreover, the criticism is justified. No translation is perfect, since it is but a human attempt to present the divine Word. Nor does the RSV claim for itself perfection. Writes one of its translators: "No translation of the Bible is final, even though it may be more accurately translated in more understandable language than any preceding translation. It is with this in mind that we might use as the keynote . . . these words from the preface of the Bishop's Bible: 'No offence can justly be taken for this new labour, nothing prejudicing any other man's

judgment by this doing; nor yet hereby professing this to be so absolute a translation, as that hereafter might follow no other that might see that which as yet was not understood. . . . Who can doubt but that such things as remain yet unknown in the gospel, shall be hereafter made open to the latter wits of our posterity, to their clear understanding?"⁴

While every careful reader of the RSV should make comparisons with the KJV and, if possible, with the original text (in its best form), and feel free to note differences in rendition which in his opinion are not justified, yet the entire procedure should take place in the spirit which the Eighth Commandment requires. It is at this point that much of the present negative criticism of the RSV breaks down. We have read some longer reviews of the RSV whose authors were quite evidently on a witch hunt, "looking for faults" and most assuredly "finding" them, as is so well indicated by the KJV translators in their preface, quoted above. Is there any reason, for example, for demanding that the same Greek word ought always be rendered by the same English word, when words both Greek and English often have many shades of meaning to be determined by usage and context? Is there any good reason, to give an instance, why the bridesmaids in Jesus' parable of His second coming should continue to be called "ten virgins" in the RSV, a term no longer used in this fashion today, when we speak of wedding attendants, when the term "maidens" answers the purpose much better? Akin to the procedure of "looking for faults" is the practice of the reviewer who suspects the sincere purpose and impugns the honest motives of the translating scholars, sensing "liberalism" where it is evidently not intended, simply because the theology of some of the translators tends toward the liberal. Fair-minded, conservative scholars have assured us that the RSV translators on the whole have succeeded quite well in their avowed purpose of keeping their own theological views out of their translation and that surprisingly little "modernism" is found in the RSV. Its critics, for example, seem to find much more in the substitution of "you" for "Thou" in the case of Jesus, than needs to be assumed. If "Thou" is reserved for God when He is addressed in prayer (since some find it difficult to address God as "you"), it seems but logical that Jesus be addressed as "you" in His human appearance among men, especially by His parents, brethren, intimate disciples, as well as by countless people, His enemies, for example, who did not regard Him as being divine. It was part of His human experience to be treated as a "man," and His deity is by no means imperiled thereby. Again, to insist that every time some suppliant prostrated himself before Jesus in Oriental

fashion he was always "worshiping" Jesus, and that the substitution of "knelt down" for "worshiped" in every case is tantamount to a denial of our Lord's deity, reveals ignorance of the various meanings of the 17th century English word "worship" (cp. Luke 14:10 and Webster) as well as of its Greek equivalent.

Or take the hotly disputed passage, Is. 7:14, for example. Had the critics contented themselves with stating that "young woman" is undesirable, unsatisfactory, inadequate, and that "virgin" is much to be preferred, we could and would go right down the line with them in our support, pleading with the RSV translators to consider making the change, which eventually they might be willing to do. But when the critics overshoot the mark and cry "false translation" or "inaccurate," then we feel constrained to come to the defense of the translators, for to translate "young woman" is certainly not false, nor even inaccurate. And when they go still further in their criticism and assert that the Virgin Birth is being denied, then every fair-minded person is bound to repudiate such an irresponsible statement, for the following three reasons: 1. to call a virgin a "young woman" is not tantamount to denying her virginity; 2. the translators themselves disclaim such denial when in the footnote they offer the alternative "or virgin," thus explaining the more general term "young woman"; 3. the N.T. proof-texts—the real *sedes doctrinae*—for the Virgin Birth (Matthew 1 and Luke 1) clearly read "virgin," and the same RSV translators render the Isaiah passage as quoted in the LXX "virgin," thus once more offering an explanation for the Hebrew "young woman." Dr. Luther Weigle, chairman of the RSV Committee, has repeatedly explained the committee's position, and is thus quoted in his latest expression on the matter; "His committee," the statement said, "had translated the Hebrew text in the case of the Old Testament and the Greek in the New Testament. The Hebrew text of Isaiah 7:14 uses the word 'almah,' which means 'young woman of marriageable age.' This word, he said, does not assert or deny the virginity of the young woman. Moreover, the Scriptural grounds for the Virgin Birth are stated clearly and unequivocally by the RSV at those points where the original Greek states them, Weigle said."⁵ This side of the picture the negative critics consistently fail to present. Nor is it noted by them how well, for example, the RSV renders the other important Messianic prophecy of Isaiah concerning the birth of Christ, Is. 9:6: "To us a child is born . . . and his name will be called . . . Mighty God!" definitely declaring the Christ Child's deity, which even Luther's translation fails to bring out, a prophecy, moreover, which certain other modern translators have altered beyond all recognition.

Translating is not everybody's business and is never an easy task, as Luther and all other translators have found. For best results it requires the highest scholarship of many translators over a long period of time, as Dr. May points out in his book:⁶ "An individual translation could have been made much more quickly; opportunity had to be given for discussion of all points brought up by the members. Sometimes several hours might be spent on a single verse." Speaking of the many modern language translations by individual acknowledged scholars during the twentieth century, May concludes: "Those that are the work of a single person represent ultimately the viewpoint of a single person."⁷ Luther may be regarded as an exception, although he too had his co-laborers. Thirty-two scholars labored for at least 15 years on the RSV.

One of the greatest difficulties in translating no doubt is that of drawing the exact line between translating and interpreting. In a certain sense translating is interpreting. Translation without interpretation is unthinkable. Thus the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably. A translation must give the meaning, and that is interpreting. But there is a point where translation stops and where the field of exegesis, or exposition (commonly called interpretation), begins. Irwin makes this clear: "The facts establish an agreed translation. Then, and then only, may the exegete and dogmatist busy himself with theological deductions from the thoughts of Biblical writers. The Bible translator is not an expositor."⁸ How extremely difficult it is at times to draw the proper line between translation and interpretation may best be illustrated by two examples of RSV translation which have evoked sharpest criticism for diametrically opposite reasons. They are the above-mentioned disputed O. T. passage, Is. 7:14, and the N. T. passage, 1 Tim. 3:2. In the Isaiah passage we have a linguistically accurate translation and no more, the Hebrew original meaning simply "young woman." Here we feel that the translators have not gone far enough, that the mere and bare translation is not adequate, and that the proper understanding of the passage, the context, and particularly Matthew 1, should have prompted the translators to interpret the general term more exactly and definitely by using the word "virgin." Our criticism of 1 Tim. 3:2 is aimed in the opposite direction. There we hold that the translators should have stopped with the general literal translation "husband of one wife," meaningless though it might thus appear without further comment, without attempting to inject into the text one of several possible interpretations. We here fault the translators with having become interpreters, and with giving us a wrong

or false interpretation, at that. Had the translators interpreted the passage the "right" way, according to our view, and said "having but one wife at one time" (or words to that effect), we probably would not find fault, although the translators in the opinion of others (e.g., those who favor the present RSV reading) would still have been guilty of adding interpretation to translation.

One more word on criticism. Much, if not most, criticism is of a negative sort, with little or no positive commendation to offset it. This is perhaps natural, but still unfair. My own first approach to the RSV was a negatively critical one, and within half a day I readily found fully a dozen cases where commonly used prooftexts are rendered in a different way, and I lost no time in bringing these to the attention of my conference. But as I began to read larger portions with recurring frequency, the many excellencies of the RSV began to show up, and the favorable impression grew and became overpowering. To list a dozen, or even half a hundred passages, which for some reason or other we do not like or consider inadequate, may present a seemingly formidable negative argument, but after all does not tell the whole story or show the other side.

A really fair criticism will begin with a recognition of the need of a new English translation. That need was felt fully a hundred years ago and again fifty years ago. To estimate that need fully one should consult the books of May and Weigle and the Introductions to the RSV and there read the overwhelming portrayal of changes which have taken place in the English language during the past 350 years. Unless this is done, many of the subtler changes in meaning will entirely escape him. Here is really an eye opener. And it is not only the continued use of obsolete and archaic words and phrases, but the whole matter of sentence structure which makes the reading of the KJV difficult. The former revisions (ERV and ARV) attempted to remove archaic words and phrases, but failed to get away from the literal Greek idiom of the KJV. These revisions rather became even more literal in their mistaken zeal for accuracy, with the result that the new revisions did not read well, but were more difficult of understanding in places. That is why these revisions failed to win general acceptance. Here is where the RSV scores most favorably. Not only the words and phrases, but also the style is thoroughly English (American) and modern, as anyone can learn who will but read connectedly larger portions of the RSV. Few of us had as yet realized to what great extent we preachers and teachers have by tradition and training become KJV Bible linguists and how much time we spend

in pulpit and class explaining English terms. And at that most of us take far too much for granted. To give but one example (which could be multiplied): I recently asked my junior catechumens what the word "suffer" in Jesus' famous dictum concerning children meant, and not one of them was able to tell me. Our children and young people do not readily understand the KJV when they try to read it. We ourselves do not fare so very much better. How many chapters of the KJV can we read fluently and with understanding at one time without tiring? Not many. It is not always because God's Word is really so very difficult or because our old Adam is fully to blame. God's Word is clear, and our new man delights in the Word of God, but an unclear version can becloud that clarity and dampen that delight. A clear, modern rendering can do much to restore both. A pastor who encountered difficulty reading just one chapter daily from the Epistles to his family in the KJV found that when he substituted Phillips' paraphrase, his family would not let him stop even after reading half a dozen chapters at a time.

The proof of the version pudding is the eating, not merely the nibbling or sampling. To evaluate the RSV aright we must *read* it, read it in larger sections, read it all the way through. Surprises await the reader who tries it. He may find himself spellbound, like the man who began reading to his wife at midnight: both were held spellbound for fully twenty chapters of the RSV Old Testament. In a relatively short time some 300 to 400 chapters of O.T. history were read with understanding and delight. Former fragments became parts of a connected whole. To read the entire life story of each of the patriarchs in one sitting, to read the entire biography of Joseph at one time, to follow Moses from the ark of bulrushes to Mount Nebo in one grand sweep, to read as a connected whole the story of Joshua and the Conquest and the history of the Judges, to read the entire life of David, and the story of the building of the Temple, all this impresses one in unforgettable manner and opens up new vistas. The O.T. characters come to life in the RSV, the conversational portions become dramatic. Turning to the N.T., you find yourself reading St. Matthew's Gospel in an hour and a half. A young schoolteacher, home for the Christmas holidays, sits down of an evening, becomes absorbed in the RSV, and reads 75 chapters before retiring, all 50 chapters of Genesis and 25 chapters of Exodus: "It reads like a novel, so fascinating!" A young couple receives the RSV for Christmas, and within two weeks she has read 40 chapters of Genesis, while he has proceeded from Genesis to Deuteronomy. A young woman has read Isaiah with

pleasure and is now reading Jeremiah. A young housewife with three small children in a few evenings reads all of Genesis. A primary teacher one day begins reading to her first-, second-, and third-graders the story of the Egyptian plagues; they beg her to continue until she has read all five chapters without stopping. A third-grader then asks permission to read some in the RSV in her spare time. The outstanding quality of the RSV is the fluency with which it can be read without needless stopping, its ability to sustain reader interest. This is due to the fact that the RSV, revision though it is, has not like earlier revisions of the KJV been content with piecemeal substitutions and simplifications, but has been freshly written in an interesting and absorbing style.

The make-up of the RSV is also most helpful in this direction. Proper paragraphing takes the place of disturbing and artificial verse fractures. Direct speech is set off with quotation marks, and poetry is set up in proper lines. The three-volume edition deserves particular praise and is certainly the most suitable for home use. Each volume is small and light, the type large, the pages not crowded. The lines run clear across the page as in other modern books. I am somewhat surprised that Bible makers have not found this solution before. Confronted with a fairly bulky book, they have hitherto either resorted to fine type hard on the eyes or else have produced a huge tome too heavy to hold. Why should tired people at the close of day, or the sick and the old, be inconvenienced by heavy or unattractive Bibles?

What, then, are we to do with the RSV? I'd say: *Read* it, study it, compare it! Then urge your people to read, *read!* There is perhaps no easier way to get your people to read the Bible than to encourage them to read the RSV. I hope this is made a prominent feature of the present Bible-reading campaign of Synod. All schemes to promote reading and study of the KJV are as nothing compared with the simple direction to read the RSV at home. That will take care of much that we wish to achieve. Our people will become a Bible-reading people once more, people who really know their Bibles from cover to cover. Our St. Louis Seminary exegetical departments might list on a book-mark a number of passages in which the KJV is to be given the preference in order to guide our people properly in reading. Let our people read both versions and make comparisons.—And what about the use of the RSV in public worship or class? It should be freely used together with and alongside the KJV. It should not displace the KJV, but neither should the KJV bar it. If certain Epistles or Gospels, correctly rendered, read more clearly and understandably from the

RSV, pastors and teachers should not hesitate to use the RSV. Many pastors have thus used the RSV N.T. for some years now, sometimes mentioning the version, sometimes not. Our people do not object to hearing a version they can more easily understand; they follow the lessons with new interest. Such use can only be profitable and helpful.

But are we, then, to adopt the RSV and reject the KJV? By no means. The RSV may never displace the KJV. That remains to be seen. It is now on trial and probation and must approve itself if it is to find a permanent place in the Church. The KJV may ultimately fall into disuse as have the English versions which preceded it, but it will never be rejected or repudiated. It will retain its honored place as the most famous English Bible. Nor are we ready to adopt the RSV in any official capacity. That will not be done now, nor for a long time to come, perhaps never. Both versions will probably have their use and place in the Church for many years to come. If a congregation by majority vote were to fully replace the KJV by the RSV, the pastor would probably have to protest. If on the other hand a congregation by majority vote were to forbid every use of the RSV in public worship, the pastor would probably also have to protest. There will be and need be no adopting or rejecting of either RSV or KJV by Synod, officials, faculties, conferences, or congregations. The use of both versions should be tolerated and encouraged. If thus the use of versions is left to the good judgment of pastors and teachers, without arbitrary commands or prohibitions, one version will shed light on the other.

Our people will not become confused, as some fear, unless we pastors and teachers ourselves confuse them by arousing undue suspicions. Our people are not unaccustomed to the simultaneous use of two Bible versions. For half a century now most of our congregations have been bilingual, and fully half of our present members have listened to German sermons as well as English. Many of those who were formerly used to reading their Bibles in German later learned to read them also in English. Thus they were confronted with two texts, which, quite apart from the difference in language, were not always the same. It is well known that while the KJV follows the original Greek and Hebrew pretty closely, Luther's translation is often much freer in his attempt to reproduce the text in German idiom. (While the KJV has Jesus say: "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," Matt. 12:34, Luther's apt paraphrase reads: "Wes das Herz voll ist, des geht der Mund ueber," retaining but two words

of the original, "heart" and "mouth." Or take the passage Job 19:25, 26 as rendered by KJV and by Luther. While the meaning is largely the same, the wording itself is quite different.) Yet such differences did not disturb our people, nor will differences in English versions.

But what about our catechism and hymnal? Will they not have to be changed to bring them in conformity with the RSV? Not until such a time as Synod itself shall decide it, and that may not be for a long time to come. Since the KJV will long be used in our churches, so likely, too, the catechism with its KJV passages. And as for the hymnal, such portions as the Introits, Graduals, and Psalms need never be changed unless Synod itself someday should decide to do so. Why cannot two versions of the sacred text be used side by side? The Protestant Episcopal Church, both in England and in America, makes liturgical use of the Psalms in much greater measure than we do, yet for many centuries it retained in its *Book of Common Prayer* (used with hymnal by all worshipers) a version of the Psalms, antedating the KJV, while using the KJV Psalter in its Bible for reading, instruction, and sermonizing. It did not seem to confuse people to use two versions of the Psalter simultaneously for centuries, although the change to one version could easily have been made. To this day we use the "Prayer Book Version" of the Lord's Prayer (with "trespasses") instead of the later version as given in the KJV. Our old hymnal (Hymn 574) contained the "Prayer Book Version" of Psalm 130 (*De Profundis*), quite different from that now found in the new hymnal (Hymn 664). We might well have retained this quaint version of the Psalm; why not? — Need we restrict ourselves to but one English version of Luther's "A Mighty Fortress," or could we not with profit enrich our spiritual lives by acquainting ourselves also with the other two famous versions by Carlyle and Hedge? But that's something else again.

Ler's read and study and use the RSV. It was not produced in a year, as one of our reviewers has said; let's not dispose of it in a year. "What's good in it should be made use of, and what's not so good in it should be improved." The RSV Committee has not proved itself unamenable to suggestions, some eighty changes having been made in the N.T. from 1946 to 1952. Let us be truly grateful to these gifted men who labored long and with success to give us this new translation. Let us humbly thank God for the RSV and for the light it sheds on His Holy Word!

Shaker Heights, Ohio

FOOTNOTES

1. Herbert Gordon May, *Our English Bible in the Making* (Philadelphia, the Westminster Press, 1952, \$2.75), p. 10.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
3. Preface to the King James Bible, "The Translators to the Reader," quoted by Luther A. Weigle, *The English New Testament from Tyndale to the Revised Standard Version* (New York, Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949, \$2.00), p. 83.
4. May, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
5. *Look*, February 10, 1953, "The Great Bible Controversy," p. 98.
6. May, *op. cit.*, p. 109.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
8. Wm. A. Irwin, *An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament* (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1952), p. 14.

Outlines on Synodical Conference Gospels

CANTATE

JOHN 11:17-27

The death of the Christian releases him from all sorrow. But it brings sorrow to the bereaved. Where shall the bereaved turn for comfort?

TURNING TO JESUS FOR COMFORT IN THE HOUR
OF BEREAVEMENT

I

The Comfort of Our Fellow Men, Though Good, Is Not Adequate
(Vv. 17-20)

A. Since the Fall all are subject to death, Rom. 5:12. Even Christians, whose sins are forgiven through faith in Christ, are cut down by the grim reaper. Lazarus, a believer, died, v. 14. Though sin is removed, the consequences remain. Illustration: Drive nails into beautiful table top. Nails can be pulled out, but marks will remain. Though our sins are removed, we are still subject to physical death. Death therefore will invade every home and bring sorrow to every heart, e. g., Mary and Martha.

B. It is customary for our fellow men to come and console us in the hour of bereavement, v. 19. An ancient custom, 2 Sam. 10:2; 1 Chron. 7:22. This is appreciated. It helps to know that others sympathize and understand.

C. But it takes more than human comfort to satisfy, vv. 20, 29. Mary and Martha no doubt appreciated consolations offered by friends, v. 19, but needed a message to heal the wounds and to take the sting out of death. They went to Jesus as soon as they heard of His arrival. We, too, appreciate human comfort (expressions of sympathy, kind things said about the deceased, offers of help), but we need more than that. We and our fellow men are victims of, not victors over, death. We therefore turn in the hour of bereavement to Him who is the Conqueror of death.

II

The Comfort Which Christ Gives Takes the Sting out of Death
(Vv. 21-27)

A. He assures us that there is a greater gift than physical life, vv. 21-23. Jesus had not prevented the physical death of Lazarus, though He had been notified of his illness, v. 3. Mary and Martha felt that Jesus could have prevented the death of Lazarus if He had been present, v. 21. Indeed, He could have, but there is a greater gift than physical life, v. 23. Though He later raised Lazarus, v. 44, Lazarus again went through physical death in order to receive the greater gift, the glory of eternal life. Physical death is the gate into the glory of heaven. Knowing this helps remove the sting of death.

B. He assures us of the resurrection to eternal life, vv. 23-26.

1. There will be a resurrection, vv. 23, 24. The soul rises immediately, Luke 23:43, and the body on the Last Day, John 5:27, 28. Martha, v. 24, and other Old Testament believers knew this, Job 19:25, 26; Ps. 17:15; Dan. 12:2. Let us never forget it.

2. This is possible because of the person and power of Christ, v. 25 a.

a. He is the Resurrection, has power over death by His own right, and did not have to ask for it, v. 22, as ancient prophets, 1 Kings 17:20-22. Is the Resurrection in every sense. He is its Source, John 5:25-27; He is its First Fruits, 1 Cor. 15:23; He will effect it by His own power, John 5:28, 29; and by His salvation alone it will be a blessing, 1 Cor. 15:17-20.

b. He who lives and believes in Christ shall never really die, v. 26. He has the true life as his present possession, John 3:36 a. His death will be a peaceful sleep, from which he shall awake in eternity, 1 Thess. 4:13-18. The soul then will live in unending happiness, and after the resurrection both body and soul shall be free from death and every evil forever, Rev. 7:14-17; 21:4. This takes the sting out of death. We do not grieve when our loved ones fall asleep at night, because we know they will awake in the morning to a new day. We are comforted when our loved ones fall asleep in Christ, for we know they will arise to eternal glory. This helps take the sting out of death.

Conclusion: Jesus Christ is the heaven-sent Redeemer, v. 27. He came to abolish death and to bring light and immortality to light through the Gospel. Let us go to Him for comfort in the hour of bereavement. He will give solid, abiding comfort.

Riverside, Calif.

WM. GRAUMANN

ROGATE

JOHN 11:28-45

This is a Sunday of confidence and victory, still in the blessed light of Easter. Introit strikes this note of joyful praise. The Gospel, John 16:23-30, carries it on and gives us the blanket promise of Jesus, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you." This victorious confidence should be reflected in all our prayers. Jesus' prayer in our text serves as a model:

FATHER, I THANK THEE THAT THOU HAST HEARD ME!

I

*We Can Pray Thus Because in Jesus We See
God's Loving Compassion*

A. Too often we are tempted to rebel against God's ways because of intense grief and sorrow. The first statement of both Martha and Mary (vv. 21, 32) contains the thought, "Lord, why didn't you come sooner?" Cf. Ps. 73:11-14; Ps. 42:9.

B. Yet we dare never think that any delay in answering our prayer is due to a lack of interest or compassion on God's part. V. 33: When Jesus saw Mary and her comforters weeping, "He groaned in the spirit and was troubled." Jesus shook Himself—an outward demonstration of inward indignation; not at any unbelief He might have noticed in these Jews, but rather in sincere compassion in seeing what havoc death causes. Heb. 2:14, 15. Cf. also v. 38.

C. "Jesus wept," v. 35 (shortest verse in English Bible). The Greek word used here indicates no loud expression of grief, but rather tears silently pressing their way out and trickling down the cheeks. All those that observed Jesus could see His sincere love and sympathy, v. 36. Rom. 12:15.

D. Jesus knows that His Father has the same loving compassion;

therefore He prays as He does, vv. 41, 42. Consider how beautifully that fits with what Jesus says in today's Standard Gospel, John 16:26, 27.

E. Accordingly, we can pray as Jesus did. In Jesus we see God's compassion. He has loved us with an everlasting love, Jer. 31:3, and proved it by sending Jesus, John 3:16. Paul makes the application, Rom. 8:32. Believing in Jesus as our Savior, we are sure of God's loving compassion, no matter how serious our affliction, Ps. 103:13; Heb. 4:15; Ps. 42:11. Thus an answer to our prayer is assured, Is. 65:24.

II

We Can Pray Thus Because in Jesus We See God's Omnipotence

A. Because God doesn't help when we think He should, unbelievers will try to cause us to doubt that He can help, v. 37; Job 2:9.

B. Because of the immediate grief even Christians begin to think there is no possibility of help, v. 39. Martha suggests Jesus leave the stone on the grave.

C. Jesus, however, proceeds with utmost confidence, v. 34: Jesus' question is really the forward march order to victory; v. 40: Jesus assures Martha that if she believes, she will be sure to see God's glory; vv. 41, 42: Jesus' prayer takes victory for granted, even over man's greatest enemy, death. He even tells His Father that His prayer is a public testimony of His absolute confidence in victory.

D. The omnipotence of God is demonstrated; v. 43: Jesus' command carries in it the life-giving power to raise Lazarus; v. 44: the result is immediate; Lazarus arises.

E. This demonstration was so obvious and certain that many of these eyewitnesses were led to faith, v. 45. That was so often the case, John 2:11; John 4:53. However, Jesus expects faith to be based on His Word and not on demonstrations, John 20:29.

F. In all your prayers, no matter how great the grief and how impossible relief may seem to be, always thank God for hearing you, because you know most certainly He can do it, Luke 1:37; Matt. 17:20.

Concluding thought: Hymn 459:1, 2.

St. Joseph, Mich.

WALTER W. STUENKEL

THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

JOHN 17:17-26

The ascension of Christ, commemorated today, did not come unexpectedly. Prophets had long foretold it (Ps. 16:11; 24:7; 68:18; 110:1). Jesus clearly foresaw it (John 14:2, 3). In fact, when the hour of His betrayal, arrest, crucifixion, and death was at hand, and He "lifted up His eyes to heaven" and prayed, He spoke as if it were all done already. It is as though He had already risen from the dead, ascended on high, and had just appeared before His Father's throne. But there He pours out the deep yearning and longing of His soul in the prayer from which our text is taken. His own work was done. The price had been paid in full. Forgiveness had been secured for all. The world stood redeemed. But oh, how much still remained to be done on earth! His spoils had to be gathered. His kingdom had to be established. His flocks had to be brought Home.—His followers were still on earth carrying out the preaching of the Gospel, but everything depended on the success of their labors. His heart goes out to them. And so, in our text, the Ascended Christ becomes

OUR INTERCEDING AND PRAYING ADVOCATE

I

*He Prays for the Safety of His Believers Still on Earth,
Carrying Out His Mission*

A. His heart goes out to His believers, still living in the midst of a hateful and dangerous world, but He needs them there. He does not pray, therefore, to have them taken out of the world, v. 15, but to have them kept from evil. They are His people, His employees, doing His work, v. 17.

B. 1. What comfort and courage should flow from this thought, that high above us our Ascended Lord is thus interceding for us!

2. How safe and secure we are in this evil world, "sanctified," set apart as His people, in His service! V. 19 links our safety with His.

3. How important, on the other hand, that we abide in the truth, to remain thus sanctified—set apart for Him!

II

He Prays for the Success of the Mission of His Believers

A. The joy and happiness of Jesus hangs upon others being won through the testimony of His believers. And so, racing ahead of His emissaries, as it were, He already prays for them "which shall believe" on Him. Note with what assurance we Christians can pursue our mission:

B. 1. Jesus prepares the way for us by His intercessions, v. 20.

2. He visualizes the converts inspired and activated for the cause, v. 21.

3. He binds up the success of it with the glory and oneness of the Holy Trinity. Everything depends on people knowing the Father and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent, vv. 25, 26; v. 3.

III

He Prays for the Eventual Homecoming of His Own to Share in His Glory

Having gone to prepare a place for us, John 14:1-3, need we any higher and greater thing to inspire us and keep us active in His service than this: "Father, I will that they . . . be with Me where I am"? Is there any room for questioning our eventual homecoming, when our Ascended Christ intercedes for us and, praying, assures our heavenly Father with "I will"?

Conclusion: May the thought of Christ's ascension keep our eyes fixed on high, but keep us busy in His service here below. Amen.

Tacoma, Wash.

ARTHUR W. SCHELP

EXAUDI

LUKE 11:5-13

After the inaugural ceremonies on January 20 of this year the press reported that Joseph Lewis of the Freethinkers of America (about 30,000) had strongly criticized the President's personal inaugural prayer as being "wholly uncalled for" and as a reflection on citizens "who do not believe in the efficacy of prayer," adding that "if President Eisenhower expects any results from praying, he will be sadly disappointed."

We on our part are heartened to know that our President

acknowledges his need of divine help, and we hope that he will often go to God in Christian prayer, as all believers should, for we know that:

PERSEVERANCE IN CHRISTIAN PRAYER HAS CHRIST'S
OWN PROMISE OF REWARD

I

*Christ Himself Has Promised to Reward Perseverance
in Christian Prayer*

A. The context requires that we think here of Christian prayer.

1. The disciples had asked the Lord to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1 b);

2. In response to their request the Lord not only gave them the "Lord's Prayer" as a model, but taught them also to persevere in this kind of prayer (Luke 11:5-9).

B. With strong asseveration the Lord assures us that perseverance in Christian prayer will be rewarded.

1. He points His promise by an illustration from the lesser to the greater.

a. A friend coming to another friend with a matter of minor importance and at a most inopportune time (v. 5, "at midnight," the doors "being shut to stay shut," perf., *kekleistai*, and the children "in bed"), usually gets his request; if not for friendship's sake, then because of his shamelessness (v. 8, *anaideia*, an impudence which totally disregards another's comfort).

b. How much sooner will the Father with whom time is never inopportune, hear the pressing, persevering, yea, shameless cries of His own dear children (Gal. 4:6; John 17:23; Rom. 8:14-16; 38, 39) when they come to Him with their own greater needs as they are expressed in the Lord's Prayer? (Vv. 1-4.)

2. The Lord, with an emphatic personal assurance, repeats His promises to hear.

a. Literally Jesus says: "Keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking" (present imperatives, hence reiterative action), and promises six times that such perseverance shall not fail of reward (vv. 9, 10).

NOTE: Perseverance in prayer does not mean to come with "vain repetitions" (*contra* Matt. 6:7), but to keep coming with sincerity with each new need no matter how insignificant it may appear and no matter how shameless we feel about such repeated coming.

b. By stating in the singular also (v. 10) the promises made in the plural (v. 9, *humin*), Jesus indicates that no individual is ever to be excepted from these assurances.

c. Significant also is the strong asseveration with which Jesus introduces these promises when He says, literally, "Besides, I myself—even I—declare unto you" (*kago humin lego*). Lenski, therefore, seeks to retain the full force of Christ's words by the following free rendition: "In addition to this strong illustration (of the friend at midnight), no less a person than I, your Lord (v. 1), make to you, My own disciples, this most positive and assured declaration."

II

Christ Has Also Promised that Perseverance in Christian Prayer Will Be Rewarded According to the Heavenly Father's Love and Wisdom

A. Fathers generally do not make mockery of their children's requests, by giving stones shaped like cakes instead of cakes, or a fishlike serpent in place of a fish (v. 11), or a dead and poisonous scorpion rolled up like an egg in place of an egg (v. 12). How much less will our heavenly Father mock our petitions by giving us useless and harmful gifts in place of that which is good! (1 John 3:1-3; John 16:23, 27; 17:23 b.)

B. Fathers, though inherently corrupt because of sin, know how to give "good things" (*agatha*, beneficial things) to their children (v. 13), how much more the holy Father in heaven!

1. God, our perfect Father (Matt. 5:48), blesses all men however unworthy (Matt. 5:45 ff.), but also promises a special reward to those who persevere in Christian prayer. This is implied by our text (v. 13 a) and is stated in Matt. 7:11; 6:5-14.

2. Jesus declares the most beneficial gift of all, however, to be the Holy Spirit (v. 13 b).

a. This is also the first gift asked for in the Lord's Prayer. (NOTE: Luther's explanation to the first three petitions and the fact that "in some forms of the Lord's Prayer (Marcion, Greg. Nys.) a petition for the gift of the Holy Spirit took the place of the First or Second Petition," *The Expositor's Greek Testament*.)

b. In the Sermon on the Mount the Savior (Matt. 6:33) urges us to seek this gift above all others, since only by the Holy Ghost can we have faith (1 Cor. 12:3 b) and its fruits (Gal. 5:22, 23); and only through a Spirit-wrought faith can we please God (Heb. 11:6) in all we undertake to do (Hebrews 11; Col. 3:17; Gal. 5:16; James 4:1-8).

Conclusion: Surely, with such certain and abundant promises of grace we ought gladly and daily to persevere in Christian prayer. But, alas, how frequently we fail! How poorly we pray! "Forgive us our trespasses," we cry, therefore, with every prayer. However, the emphatic and repeated promises of our text should make us certain that we are heard and that our sins are forgiven; and should inspire us, according to our various gifts and callings (Epistle), to "serve His Majesty" with "a pure heart" (Collect), and to be His witnesses unto the uttermost (Gospel). Amen.

Chicago, Ill.

THEODORE F. NICKEL

THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

JOHN 6:60-71

The first Pentecost, with its miraculous and sensational events, was a unique occurrence in history that will not be repeated in just that way again. Pentecost is also a continuous process. Whenever and wherever the Word is proclaimed, there is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost is profoundly significant for us today. Therefore

OUR PENTECOST PRAYER: "COME, HOLY SPIRIT"

I

Preserve Us from Unbelief and Offense

A. Context: the feeding of the five thousand, followed by Christ's discourse on the true Bread of Life. Text reports reaction of hearers. "Hard saying." What? Christ, the Bread of Life, the only Source of eternal life. *Sola gratia*. Necessity of faith in Him.

This most of the hearers found offensive and impossible to hear, i.e., accept. Outwardly in circle of disciples, yet unbelievers, 1 Cor. 2:14. Followed their "flesh," their natural reason, pride, self-righteousness. To them the sweetest Gospel was repulsive and intolerable.

B. What a calamity! Loss of eternal salvation. It can't happen to us? The *opinio legis* inheres in all human hearts. Outward circle of disciples today; visible Church. Many take offense at the *solus* of the Gospel and will accept only a diluted "Christianity" that leaves room for reason and pride and works. When, therefore, the unique and exclusive character of Christ's Gospel is made clear, many find this message unbearable; they are offended, they "murmur," they "believe not," they "walk no more with Him"; yes, there are those who "betray Him."

C. Because this is an ever-present danger for us, we can observe this festival of the Holy Spirit in no better way than with the fervent, heartfelt prayer: "O Holy Spirit, Thou Spirit of truth, descend to us, enter our heart, by Thy power preserve us from our flesh, bring to naught the objections of our sin-blinded reason, destroy our natural pride, and annihilate every trace of work-righteousness in us. Cast down every idol throne; reign supreme, and reign alone." For this we rely on the promise of Christ, that His Spirit shall lead us into all truth, John 16:13.

II

Lead Us to Faith and Confession

A. In His loving concern for those who found His Gospel of grace and faith so unpalatable and therefore chose the ruinous road of unbelief, Jesus spoke to them of the ways and means of coming to faith in Him, to spiritual life, issuing in eternal life, v. 63. The Holy Spirit is the "Lord and Giver of life." He alone, by His mysterious yet divinely efficacious operation, stifles the unprofitable flesh and creates the new spiritual life. He removes the natural blindness and glorifies Christ in men, John 16:14, so that they may now behold His glory, "the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," 1:14, and believe in Him. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth."

The Holy Spirit works faith through means of grace: the Word of Christ, in any form of application—general proclamation, private absolution, Baptism, Lord's Supper. Compare the implications of John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15; Acts 2:8; 10. Text, vv. 68, 69. Note juxtaposition: "Thou hast the words of eternal life"—"and we believe," etc. This faith, this firm conviction of the heart, is followed by the beautiful confession, v. 69.

B. Faith the *sine qua non*. For you and me. Today. III Art., expl. Therefore our earnest petition on this day of Pentecost: "Come, Holy Spirit! Lead us to Jesus, our Savior. Kindle the true faith in us through the Word of Jesus. Strengthen, and preserve our faith."

"Give us the courage of our convictions and bring us to a clear-cut confession." II Art., expl.: "I believe that Jesus Christ . . . is my Lord." "No man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost," 1 Cor. 12:3. See also Rom. 10:9.

C. The work of the Holy Spirit is indispensable. We have no more urgent need. The Father is eager to give us this greatest Gift through His Son. Let us pray for this Gift above all. Luke 11:13. Hymn 231.

Sheboygan, Wis.

H. J. A. BOUMAN

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY TRINITY

MATT. 28:16-20

All religions glorify or worship some God: the Hindu, Brahma; the Moslem, Allah; the Alaskan, the totem pole; the Unitarian, an idol father; the Christian, the Holy Trinity. Men have glorified pigs, cows, ancestors, sun, gold, and hundreds of other things. The Athenians had an altar to "the unknown god."

Religion is of two kinds, that which comes from God and that which comes from man. True religion glorifies the Trinity. False religion may glorify anything or everything (pantheists).

GLORY BE TO THE FATHER AND TO THE SON AND TO THE HOLY GHOST

(NOTE: This *gloria* was first used in the Apostolic Church to "Christianize" the Psalms. It has same use in our liturgy today.)

I

The Glory That Resides in the Trinity

A. His name is His glory, v. 19.

1. The Father creates us and adopts us as His sons.
2. The Son becomes our Redeemer.
3. The Holy Ghost becomes our Comforter.
4. No one can explain this Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity.
5. All Christians believe it. See Athanasian Creed — "And the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity." This doctrine identifies Christianity.

B. His power is His glory, v. 18.

1. He has all power in heaven — power over angels, archangels, Seraphim, and saints. He also has power over evil spirit world.
2. He has all power on earth — power over means of transportation, expansion of commerce, methods of communication, science of language, spread of culture, talents of men, and all things usable to speed the rapid flight of the Gospel.

C. His other attributes are His glory — eternal, omniscient, holy, full of grace, etc.

II

The Glory That We Give to the Trinity

A. Our worship glorifies Him, v. 17.

1. He commands our worship.
2. Our morning worship begins "In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost." It ends with the Aaronic benediction, using "Lord" thrice.
3. Our worship says "Thank You." It demonstrates utter reliance upon Him. It seeks His favor.
4. Our new church buildings are dedicated "To the glory of God the Father," etc. See dedication booklets.
5. Our worship is God-centered, not man-centered, as in Modernism and other false religions.
6. When "some doubted," the glory of the worship was marred.

B. Our obedience glorifies Him, vv. 19, 20 a.

1. "Go" is better translated "having gone." Jesus takes it for granted that Christians will go everywhere with the truth.
2. "Therefore" — because of His power and to His glory.
3. "Teach" is an unfortunate translation. R. S. V. has corrected it to "make disciples." The method of making disciples is prescribed.
 - a. Baptize in the name of the Trinity. No other name has the power to bring faith and salvation through Baptism.
 - b. Teach the whole counsel of God, not part of it.
4. The disciples faithfully carried out this great commission. It was probably given to the "above 500" mentioned by Paul 1 Cor. 15:6. They filled their world with the Gospel, in spite of hardship.
5. This commission is still in force. We use every modern means to fulfill it — attractive churches, radio, television, billboards, printing presses, etc. Modern communication and travel lightens the burden of those who go to "all nations."
6. What glory to God if Apostolic zeal is coupled with twentieth-century methods!
7. Building and maintaining Christian schools for every age level is part of our obedience to this command.

C. Our trust in His presence glorifies Him, v. 20 b.

1. First disciples were fearful. They needed the assurance of Jesus' presence.
2. We need it, too. It redounds to His glory that we are utterly and totally dependent upon Him for strength and means to do His will.
3. "Even unto the end of the world" is an extra promise that His presence extends to our generation.

Conclusion: Does your life, your witness, your personality, your possession, your time, and everything about you sing, "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost"?

Baltimore, Md.

GEORGE H. SOMMERMEYER

THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

PLANNED PARENTHOOD

The following statement was prepared by the Commission on Social Relations of the American Lutheran Conference and submitted late last fall to its biennial meeting. The Conference referred the statement, believed to be the first on planned parenthood by a Lutheran group in America, to its five member church bodies for study and review during the next biennium. The statement reads:

Believing firmly in the power of the principles of love, of freedom, and of stewardship to guide the actions of Christian men and women in whom dwells the sanctifying Spirit of the Living God, the Commission on Social Relations of the American Lutheran Conference expresses the following guiding principles concerning the planning of parenthood.

1. A Christian husband and wife know that children are the natural and desirable fruit of their marriage in fulfillment of God's command, "Be fruitful and multiply."

2. Every child born into the world should be a wanted child. To be unwanted by its parents is a fate more cruel to the child than is poverty, low social standing, or nearly any other handicap.

3. Married couples have the freedom so to plan and order their sexual relations that each child born to their union will be wanted both for itself and in relation to the time of its birth. How the couple uses this freedom can properly be judged not by man but only by God.

4. The means which a married pair uses to determine the number and spacing of the births of their children are matters for them to decide with their own consciences, on the basis of competent medical advice and in a sense of accountability to God.

5. No moral merit or demerit can be attached to any of the medically approved methods for controlling the number and spacing of children. Whether the means used be those labeled "natural" or "artificial" is of far less importance than the spirit in which these means are used.

6. Continence in the marriage relationship, when its sole purpose is the selfish avoidance of pregnancy, is equally wrong as is the use of contraception toward this same selfish goal. An overabundant production of children without realistic regard to the

responsibilities involved may be as sinful and selfish as is the complete avoidance of parenthood.

7. Undue delay in beginning their families, or too great an interval between births, will be recognized by the Christian married pair as unwise for many reasons. The Christian couple also will realize the falseness of using economic and other materialistic excuses as the sole reason for limiting their acceptance of parental responsibilities.

8. Abortion must be regarded as the destruction of a living being and, except as a medical measure to save the mother's life, will not be used by a Christian to avoid an unwanted birth. A Christian must come to accept the unintended pregnancy as a part of God's superior planning and willingly welcome the new child as a gift from Him.

9. A married couple desirous of children but seemingly unable to have any of their own should seek skilled medical counsel. Often such medical help will assist the couple to be fruitful in their marriage relationship.

10. In those cases where both husband and wife are shown to be fertile but are unable to initiate pregnancy, the artificial insemination of the wife with her husband's semen, performed under the administration of a competent medical practitioner, may be justified.

11. Because of moral, and clouded legal, social, biological and psychological aspects, the conscientious Christian will avoid taking part in any portion of the process of artificial insemination where the semen of a man other than the wife's husband is used.

12. Sex relations outside of marriage, whether before an intended marriage or outside an established marriage bond, are a violation of God's will. The use of contraceptives by the unmarried "can indeed reduce the risk of an illegitimate child, but this changes the character of premarital relationships just as little as the fact that one party to adultery may be sterile changes the nature of adultery" (quotation from recent letter by bishops of the Church of Sweden).

13. The Christian couple who find themselves unable to have children of their own may choose to adopt children through legitimate channels, or they may find constructive outlets for their interests in community services for the welfare of children. Much as they will regret their inability to have children, they

will learn to accept this fact in their lives as God's way of directing them to some other sphere of useful service in His kingdom.

14. When practiced in the spirit of love, of freedom, and of stewardship accountability to God, the conscientious planning for the number and spacing of the births of their children may bring the Christian husband and wife a sense of peace, of joy, and of contentment over their partnership with God in His creation of each new life entrusted to them.

P. M. B.

RIGHTEOUS AND AT THE SAME TIME A SINNER

In 1898 Pastor Friedrich von Bodelschwingh of Bethel invited German pastors to take part in a pastoral conference, a so-called *theologische Woche*. Scientific theology had become so utterly alienated from the Church that it was no longer concerned with the work of Christian ministers, who thereupon turned away from scientific theology as having no longer any worth-while message for them. Pastor von Bodelschwingh tried to bring the two together, and so in the summer of 1898 there was held at Bethel the first *theologische Woche* under the able leadership of Prof. Adolf Schlatter. After that these theological conferences were held every two years.

With these thoughts Dr. Gerhard Friedrich in *Die Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung* (November 30, 1952) introduces his discussion of the *theologische Woche*, held at Bethel last year, from October 6 to 10. The large attendance showed that these conferences are still desired, though since 1898 the theological situation in Germany has greatly changed.

The general theme of the conference was "The Reality of Justification in the Life of the Christian" (*Die Wirklichkeit der Rechtfertigung im Leben des Christen*). Guenther Bornkamm of Heidelberg introduced the series of lectures on justification by an essay "The Righteousness of God as the Source of the New Life According to the Message of Paul" (*"Die Gerechtigkeit Gottes als Ursprung des neuen Lebens nach der Botschaft des Paulus"*), in which he presented and clarified the Pauline doctrine of justification. Georg Merz of Neuendettelsau in a third essay, "The Proclamation of Justification in the Church Today" (*"Die Verkuendigung der Rechtfertigung in der heutigen Gemeinde"*) pointed out on the basis of the synoptic Gospels and the Lutheran Confessions that man receives justification without the deeds of the Law, solely by faith in Christ. A revival (*Erweckung*) can come only from the preaching of justification. In a fourth essay Prof. W. Vischer of Montpelier endeavored to supply a Scripturally

oriented answer to the question: "What Is God's Purpose with Regard to the New State of Israel?" (*"Was will Gott mit dem neuen Staat Israel?"*)

Dr. Friedrich's chief interest attaches to the second essay, "*Luther's Thesis: SIMUL IUSTUS ET PECCATOR*." On this essay he reports in greater detail, and we are happy about this, since we regard this subject as one of the greatest importance for Christian ministers over against both Romanism and enthusiasm as we find it in our own country, especially in the Holiness groups and, in general, in Reformed Fundamentalism, which too fails to distinguish properly between Law and Gospel and so is in opposition to Lutheranism on this point. This essay was presented by Dr. W. Joest. (Cp. Joest, *Gesetz u. Freiheit*, reviewed in this journal, current volume, p. 75 f.) The essayist said, to quote the report in part, that Luther applies the *simul iustus et peccator* in both a total and a partial aspect of man. On the one hand, he says: *Totus homo iustus: totus homo peccator*; that is, the whole person is justified, and again, the whole person is a sinner. This formulation expresses, on the one hand, how the believer is regarded by God and, on the other, how he is in his own estimation, for so it is explained by Luther himself when he describes the Christian as *peccator in re; iustus in spe. Sub specie ipsius peccator; sub specie Christi iustus. In relatione sanctus; in qualitate plenus peccator. Quoad Christum iustus; quoad carnem peccator*. That is to say: The Christian is a sinner in reality; but righteous in hope. He is a sinner from his own point of view, but righteous in view of Christ [in whom he trusts]. In relation [to Christ] he is holy; but as he is constituted now, he is fully a sinner. So far as Christ is concerned, he is righteous, but so far as his flesh is concerned, he is a sinner.

In short, as the believer must regard himself, he is altogether a sinner (*plenus peccator*). But this actual situation (*Tatbestand*) of his life has been totally changed through Christ. According to how the Christian is regarded (*nach der Geltung*), namely, by God, he is perfectly righteous and perfectly holy, just as Christ is perfectly righteous and perfectly holy.

In other passages, however, Luther does not use this *totus*-formulation and speaks of a *partim-partim* relation. The believer is indeed sinful, but he no longer sins willfully; he is already righteous, but not yet in his conduct (*mit der Tat*).

But what, then, is the relation between the forensic justification and the reality of the new life (sanctification)? Here Luther does not sharply distinguish between justification and sanctification. As God

declares the believer righteous, so also He sanctifies him; for God's Word is a creative Word which has power to make real (the believer's sanctification). The Word that justifies also sanctifies.

We can here reproduce only a few leading thoughts as they are given in the report. There are in it expressions and statements which, we believe, can be understood only if the entire essay could be studied. Dr. Joest believes to have found antitheses between Luther and Paul, though these, as he says, are not essential. We wonder, however, whether even accidental antitheses between Luther and Paul exist. The essayist states that Luther and Paul agree in the vital point that justification separates the believer from sin; and, again, that sin remains in the life of the Christian. If that is true, then the difference as to "how Luther and Paul speak of the Christian and sin" may be one merely of emphasis or orientation. But to settle this question also requires the study of the essay as a whole.

As said before, Luther's *simul iustus et peccator* touches the very heart of evangelical truth and should receive careful study also in Lutheranism outside Germany. Unless we thoroughly understand it, we can understand neither sin, nor justification, nor sanctification; nor can we in that case rightly distinguish between Law and Gospel.

J. T. MUELLER

REGARDING CHRISTIAN CONFIRMATION

The *Informationsblatt fuer die Gemeinden in den niederdeutschen lutherischen Landeskirchen* (Hannover, Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, Luebeck, Braunschweig, Schaumburg und Eutin) publishes, in its issue of December 3, 1952, an "Opinion on the Question of Confirmation" which the "Theological Commission" of the VELKD submitted in 1951. It is preceded by an explanatory article by Dr. Heinz Brunotte, "Confirmation According to the Lutheran Conception" ("*Die Konfirmation nach lutherischem Verstaendnis*"). We restate its principal declarations as matters of general interest.

Confirmation, according to the "Opinion," is neither a Sacrament nor a sacramental act. It is rather co-ordinated with Baptism and the Lord's Supper. "It leads from Baptism to the Lord's Supper."

Confirmation presupposes Baptism and is demanded by its administration as Infant Baptism. This does not mean that confirmation is in any sense a complement of Baptism, nor is it a renewal of the baptismal vow. In Baptism God acts, and His saving action is complete in the gift of Baptism. It requires no human supplementation. It awaits only the believing reception of the baptized.

Confirmation therefore is not necessary for salvation. It is an

ecclesiastical institution, which in its peculiar form has an historical development. Objectively it is motivated by the responsible administration of the Sacraments. In confirmation the "Yes" of the godparents, given by way of proxy when the child was baptized, is taken up by the baptized person's own "Yes." Though this "Yes" of the [believing] person to the grace imparted to him in Baptism demands a daily decision during his whole life (cf. Small Catechism, IV, 4), it must, nevertheless, be witnessed clearly and publicly in some period of his life.

Confirmation thus leads the baptized believer to the Holy Supper. The Church demands the public "Yes" of the baptized before he receives Communion for the first time, and this is motivated by the fact that the worthy reception of the Lord's Supper presupposes the grace of Baptism. The Church cannot admit to the Lord's Supper anyone who does not confess himself to be a baptized Christian.

Confirmation, in its special sense, is embraced in the action of the merciful God who once received the baptized into His grace and now strengthens and confirms him in this grace through the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

The relation of confirmation to catechetical instruction results from the fact that confirmation is associated with both Sacraments, Baptism and Communion. Catechetical instruction is demanded by the baptismal command: "Baptize, and teach." It is demanded by Holy Communion because it requires detailed indoctrination concerning this Sacrament as the climax of the whole instruction. Those who are admitted to confirmation instruction in this special sense must first have been instructed in the fundamentals of the Christian doctrine.

The confirmation vow dare not be omitted, for it is the "Yes" of the confirmand as his confirmation confession. This confirmation confession, however, must not be regarded as the heart ("*Mittelpunkt*") of the confirmation. It is not a vow in the sense that it is something which man accomplishes in the presence of God, or something which he promises by his own power ("*von sich aus*"). It is rather the response of faith which apprehends the gracious gift of Baptism.

In formulating this confirmation confession all plerophoric (exaggerated) expressions should be avoided, especially such as place the emphasis in confirmation on a false, subjective aspect. It is sufficient if the response of the confirmand contains the "Yes" to the grace of God imparted in Word and Sacrament.

Dr. Brunotte, in his explanatory article, remarks on this paragraph that it is directed against the overemphasis of the confirmation vow

during the period of Pietism. He suggests the following simple question and answer after the recital (by the whole congregation) of the Apostles' Creed: "Do you desire by the grace of God to continue and grow in this faith which you have confessed? Then witness this by your Yes." The confirmands, together: "Yes, by the grace of God."

Several details are added to the above which, too, may be of general interest.

The examination of the confirmands in the presence of the congregation belongs to the rite of confirmation as an essential part, though because of practical reasons it is commonly separated from it.

Holy Communion, according to the custom of the Church, is preceded by the confession of sins. The confirmands are to make confession first. This precedence should receive serious attention.

The association of confirmation with Holy Communion does not demand that both take place on the same day.

Since the solemn blessing ("*Einsegnung*") is to be understood as an intercession and not as a communication of the Holy Spirit ("*Geistesmitteilung*"), the respective forms are to be understood as expressions of prayer and not of [Spirit] impartation ("*als deprekativ und nicht exhibitiv*").

Confirmation is to be administered in such a way that positively in a spiritual sense it counteracts all monopolization by secular agencies, misinterpretation, and misrepresentation ("*dass ihrer saekulaeren Ueberfremdung, Missdeutung und Entstellung positiv im geistlichen Sinne entgegengewirkt wird*").

These "rules of church life" should not be imposed legalistically on the member churches of the VELKD, yet they are submitted for serious consideration and ultimate acceptance. An earnest attempt is thus made to present the question of confirmation "*nach lutherischem Verstaendnis*."

J. T. MUELLER

LETTER ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIAN AMERICANS BY NCCCUA

"A Letter . . . to the Christian People of America" was adopted by the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America which met in Denver in December. Much in this "letter" truly gladdens the heart of every devout Christian reader. By way of example we quote the following paragraphs:

We are, above all, Churches of Christ. The constitutional tie which binds us is our common allegiance to Him as our Divine Lord and Saviour. Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, who is for all of us the one and only Head of the Church, drew us together and

holds us together, in unswerving loyalty to Himself and to one another, and leads us to seek an ever greater unity. . . .

The spiritual life of our Churches must be deepened. We must fathom depths of spiritual experience which we have not yet fully explored. The meaning of a "new man in Christ" is something which millions who profess the name of Christ do not know. Let us betake ourselves to the devotional study of the Bible individually and in our family circles, and let more courses for Bible study be provided in our Churches. Let prayer become a deeper reality. Let us not absent ourselves from the corporate worship of God. Let us take advantage of every help to the understanding of our faith which our Churches make available for us. Let us as good stewards of our abundance regularly devote to the work of God through His Church an ample share of that which He has entrusted to us. Above all, let us commit ourselves to God and to His will with joyous abandon, asking Him to help us to pay the price of being "filled with the Spirit." Unexpected insights and new experiences of release and spiritual power will then come to us. Everything will become new.

But there are also paragraphs in this "letter" which speak of religion in terms so general that it practically adumbrates the vaguest kind of religious belief. One cannot but suspect that the Christian religion is regarded merely the most authoritative, the most relevant, and the "superiorly inspired" form of religion. Secularism is interpreted as a religion which denies the reality and authority of God and enthrones the state as god. Indeed, man may differentiate between "religion" and "secularism" as both terms are employed in the "letter." But in God's eyes both represent a false ideology, since neither is Christian. Apart from this criticism, we are compelled to comment on the paragraphs which speak about education. These read:

The crucial problem concerning religion in education emerges in relation to the public schools. We believe in our public school system. It is unfair to say that where religion is not taught in a public school, that school is secular or godless. The moral and cultural atmosphere in a school and the attitude, the viewpoints, and the character of the teachers, can be religious, and exert a religious influence, without religion being necessarily taught as a subject. On the other hand, a way must be found to make the pupils of American schools aware of the heritage of faith upon which this nation was established, and which has been the most transforming influence in western culture. This we believe can be

done in complete loyalty to the basic principle involved in the separation of Church and state. On no account must an educational system which is permeated by the philosophy of secularism, something quite different from religious neutrality, be allowed to gain control of our public schools. We cannot, moreover, admit the proposition that in a public system of education the state should have the unchallenged right to monopolize all the hours during which a boy or girl receives instruction five days of the week. In some constitutional way provision should be made for the inculcation of the principles of religion, whether within or outside the precincts of the school, but always within the regular schedule of a pupil's working day.

In the meantime, the state should continue to accord freedom to religious bodies to carry on their own schools. But those who promote parochial schools should accept the responsibility to provide full support for those schools, and not expect to receive subsidies or special privileges from public authorities.

The subsidization of education carried on under religious auspices, would both violate the principle of the separation between Church and state, and be a devastating blow to the public school system, which must be maintained. The solution of the problem lies in loyal support of our public schools and in increasing their awareness of God, rather than in state support of parochial schools. The reverent reading of selections from the Bible in public school assemblies or classes would make an important contribution toward deepening this awareness.

In terms of cold logic the above reasoning is valid. Whether some of its basic propositions are true is another matter. The trouble is that after much experimentation no way has as yet been found which enables teachers in public schools actually to teach religion without violating the principle of the separation of Church and state and without crossing denominational lines. Furthermore, to give courses in the public school system which develop the historical growth of the Jewish-Christian tradition, or point up its peculiar emphases in contradistinction to those of other religions, is in no sense indoctrination of divine truth. But as long as Protestants believe that the preservation of the public school system is the *sine qua non* of our democratic form of government, as long as they pay hardly more than lip service to the establishment of parochial schools, and as long as they refuse to admit that there can well be a legitimate and an illegitimate form of state subsidy to parochial schools (Proceedings of Saginaw Convention,

1944, pp. 131—34; Proceedings of Chicago Convention, 1947, pp. 282 f.), just so long Protestants have no answer to the problem of how effectively to transmit their denominational heritage to their children and to surround their children for a substantial part of the day with the thought and influence of the Word of God. P. M. B.

PERIPHERAL PIFFLE

Under this heading, the editor of the *Lutheran Outlook* (January, 1953) offers a timely editorial in which he vents his wrath on preaching that is not of the kind which the Christian minister owes to a starving world crying out for the Bread of Life. One wonders how the criticism relates to the preaching of Lutheran pastors at this time when sound Lutheranism encounters so many hungry souls, at home and abroad, that are willing to listen. We quote the editorial in part:

"I got hold of a new book on preaching. It is a symposium of thirteen famous preachers. The title is 'This Is My Method,' and the subtitle 'The Art of Sermon Construction.' Each of the thirteen describes his method of producing a sermon, and then gives also the sermon that was thus produced.

"A famous name attracted me, the name of a man who has published a dozen or more volumes of sermons. So I turned to the proper page and read that chapter first. The text was a surprise. It consisted of seven words from Acts 9:25: 'And let him down in a basket.' To pick a text like that from the inexhaustible riches of God's Word, and make that the basis of a week's work and a half-hour discourse to a large and expectant congregation is an almost unbelievable absurdity. Suppose that is the last sermon you are permitted to preach. Before another Sunday death and judgment overtake you."

The writer then describes an imaginary dialog between the preacher and St. Peter at the pearly gates (the "hoary legend" about whom he, however, does not believe). At the close of the dialog the editorial proceeds:

"Are your ears red! A chance to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to an immortal soul about to be called before the Judge, and you went clear out to the edge of God's Word and presented him with a little peripheral pebble. You might have preached Christ, as Paul always did; but no, you had a different idea. You could have taken some important moment from St. Paul's life when he, speaking by the Spirit of God, gave some ringing revelation of divine truth important to all men for all time; but no, you wanted to go away in a corner and pick up a little pebble that no one else would think of using. So you talk about such things [circumstances connected with the suggested

event in the Apostle's life] for thirty minutes to the hungry souls in your congregation. And let them down in a sermon."

Time (January 19, 1953), not at all a religious periodical, issues a similar "warning to preachers," and that on the basis of a recently published book, *Communion Through Preaching* (Scribner: \$2.50) by Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin, 76, "longtime president of Union Theological Seminary and onetime (1943-44) Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.," now retired. According to the report in *Time*, "there are [as Dr. Coffin writes] few congregations which do not suffer from a surplus of 'ministerial chat.'"

We mention a few of the quotations given from Dr. Coffin's book in *Time's* article. "A talk on current events, or on some social evil, or on managing one's feelings, escaping one's worries, or overcoming fears, on 'integrating one's personality' . . . is hardly the vehicle for the personal approach to Almighty God eliciting adoration, trust and love."—"It is no pulpit convention which requires a text from Scripture. It is the effort to recapture for our messages today the supreme quality of revealing God."—"To how many of us, both in the pulpit and pew, might the question be put: 'Received ye the Holy Spirit when ye believed?' Our congregation might reply: 'The Holy Spirit—why, that is what they talk about in the fringe sects, not in proper congregations affiliated with the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.' Yes, and that is perhaps one reason why these fringe sects keep springing up in place after place." To this *Time* adds: "Along with the fringe sects (and the founders of Protestantism), Presbyterian Coffin believes that the Spirit may and must come to those who preach His Word and hear it."

The following quotation from Dr. Coffin's book deserves yet greater attention: "The curse of our pulpit is its bald moralism. The ambassador of Christ forgets his embassy, says next to nothing of the Master he is representing, and spends his time telling those before him what they ought to be and to do. . . . Movements, crusades, campaigns, missions have filled the horizon. One sometimes wonders what there has been in public worship for the very large number of persons who were in no position to participate in these strenuous efforts. . . . Our Lord's gracious invitation to 'the weary and heavy laden' has not been prominent in American preaching. . . ."

J. T. MUELLER

PRESENT-DAY ROMAN CATHOLIC INTERESTS

In its issue of January 17, 1953, *America* stresses a number of present-day interests of Roman Catholicism. It first mentions the latest encyclical, *Orientales Ecclesias*, which went out from the Vatican

on December 30, 1952, to the Eastern Churches. It "was meant to demonstrate the continued compassion and solicitude of the Holy Father for them in their martyrdom." The pope singled out for special mention the Ukrainians, the largest single rite, with five million communicants, whose bishops were "among the first in the defense of their religion to endure hardship, affliction and outrage." In April, 1945, the Soviets seized most of the Catholic bishops and sentenced them to forced labor. Two of the bishops died in prison. The pope also praised the Romanian Catholics, who number a million and a half, for their tenacity in holding to the faith in spite of the pressures put upon them.

No less important was the reassurance given by Pope Pius XII on December 31, 1952, to the Catholics in India, especially to the Indian peoples and their government, that the "Church does not constitute a foreign element nor seeks to impose alien cultural patterns in India." The occasion for the statement was the Eucharistic Congress held at Ernakulam, on the Malabar coast, to celebrate the 1900th anniversary of the arrival of the Apostle Thomas and the fourth centenary of the death of St. Francis Xavier. St. Thomas is believed to have landed near Ernakulam A.D. 52. He was martyred at Mylapore, near Madras, sixteen years later. His converts are the "Thomas Christians," who, however, belong to the Roman Catholic Church only in part. The pope urged them to "remain united among themselves in spite of the many differences in race, rite and customs." He reminded them: "You all profess the same faith, you are all brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, all children of the same Mother, His Church."

An article on "The Church in the New India" by Bonny Correa, a young Indian Catholic journalist, in the same issue of *America*, begins with the words: "The advent of independence has meant both new dignity and new difficulties for the Church in India. Definitely there has been a growth in Catholic prestige." As an indication of this fact he writes that "there were more consecrations of bishops in the five and a half years since August, 1947, than in any decade of Indian Church History." He adds: "Due to the wisdom of the Vatican in keeping pace with national sentiment in the new India, most of these bishops have been natives."

The same issue of *America* reports favorably on the progress made by the Catholic Book Club since 1948, when the America Press took over its operation. Since that time the Club distributed 97,590 books, which reached a reading public of about 500,000. Among the books singled out are: Stern's *Pillar of Fire*, Gerard's *Autobiography of a*

Hunted Priest, Graham's *Catholicism and the World Today*, Brodrick's *St. Francis Xavier*. The C. B. C. is now laying its schemes for a considerable membership increase in its twenty-fifth year.

Considerable anxiety is expressed in the same issue about the "population outlook for the U.S. in 1960." The closing paragraph says: "All signs point in the direction of continuously aging population, a declining birth rate and a declining rate of increase. If this trend continues, the United States may again find itself on the demographic toboggan of the 1930's, with a decreasing population, headed toward stabilization and eventual decline."

J. T. MUELLER

SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

In the publication of the *Martin Luther-Bund*, *Der Martin Luther-Bund* (October, 1952), Superintendent Heinzelmann of *Die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche Altpreußens*, better known to us as *Die Breslauer-Synode*, shows why this Free Church was forced for conscience' sake to separate its relation with the Prussian State Church. The article is objectively historical, winningly irenic, but nevertheless frank and firm in its confessional character.

In clarifying the historical background of the situation, Pastor Heinzelmann points out how Elector Sigismund of Brandenburg, seventy-four years after the establishment of the Lutheran Reformation in his country in 1539, adopted for himself and his family the Calvinistic faith. Since that time the Hohenzollern tried to unite the Ev.-Lutheran Church and the Ev.-Reformed Church in Brandenburg and Prussia into the "Evangelical Church." Friedrich Wilhelm III, on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession in 1830, succeeded in enforcing this union in his land, after he had inaugurated union transactions by his church law of September 27, 1817. His aim was a "Revived Christian Church"; his means, the new "Union Agenda" (order of service); his immediate objective, altar fellowship between Lutherans and Calvinists.

The new order of things meant that since both Lutheran and Reformed Confessions were acknowledged as possessing equality of rights, church members could choose between the Lutheran and the Reformed doctrines of the Lord's Supper. For the Lutherans this meant that at the Lutheran Communion Table the Reformed symbolism was recognized as Scriptural, and this again meant practically the abrogation of the Lutheran Confessions. There was no unity of faith, but a mingling of truth and error. Lutherans who resisted the church law of 1817 were severely punished, because they were branded by the state as political rebels.

Nevertheless confessing Lutherans fought for what they believed to be the divine truth, and after much deliberation they left the State Church to witness to the truth as a "church among churches." In 1845 the Free Church was recognized and tolerated as a Lutheran denomination, which now adopted the official name Ev.-Luth Church in Prussia (*Ev.-Luth. Kirche in Preussen*). In 1908 it was given by Prussian state authorities the epithet "Old Lutheran" (*altlutherisch*). Among the founders of the "Ev.-Luth. Church in Prussia" the writer mentions especially two academic leaders, Professor Scheibel and Professor Huschke. The connection between the new church and the State Church, or at least with Lutheran groups or societies in the State Church, was not entirely interrupted. It was only in 1947, when Lutheran, Reformed, and "United" churches formed the *Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland*, that complete separation was inaugurated with great reluctance (*in tiefem Schmerz*) as a reaction against the denial and an assertion of the Lutheran faith.

Pastor Heinzelmann admits that the Lutheran State Churches now earnestly contend for the Lutheran Church and its renovation (*Erneuerung*). He acknowledges, on the other hand, also the danger that lies in the destructive influence of the Union upon the Lutheran Church and faith. Toward the close of his article he writes: "We know that whether the Ev.-Luth. Church of Old Prussia agrees with the Lutheran State Churches or not, whether it is appreciated or not, nevertheless it is bound to them by its history and the common [Lutheran] Confessions. No church may be completely isolated in the world. Churches constantly influence one another and in some way they live from and for each other. God grant that this may be done for the building of the communion of saints according to the Third Article."

With the *Martin Luther-Bund* the *Ev.-Luth. Kirche Altpreussens* is still somewhat connected, inasmuch as it supports its *Gotteskasten* or eleemosynary work.

J. T. MUELLER

BRIEF ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

In December, 1952, direct formal communication between the Yugoslav hierarchy and the Vatican was cut off when the government of Yugoslavia severed diplomatic relations with the Vatican and forced the departure from Belgrade of its charge d'affaires, Msgr. Silvio Oddi. In January of this year seven of Yugoslavia's highest-ranking Roman Catholic prelates, at the Communist leader's request, conferred for two hours with Premier Marshal Tito and agreed to explore ways of settling

the Church-State dispute. The Belgrade radio reported the surprise meeting to the Yugoslav people and said that the bishops agreed to help form a joint commission with the government to study all Church and religious questions; their report then would be used as the basis for an attempt at settlement of the highly charged controversy between the Church and the Communist regime. . . . Marshal Tito told the prelates that the government wanted amicable relations with the Catholic Church; that the regime desired merely to separate Church and State as they are separated in other countries; that it was ready to consider church requirements "within the framework of the Yugoslav constitution." He repeated the assertion that the Vatican had interfered in the domestic affairs of Yugoslavia; now the bishops could settle differences with the government without participation of the Holy See. — No one, of course, who has followed the Church news of late years can avoid suspicion of such Communist assurances; but whoever believes that the Vatican is averse to meddling with government affairs has not studied, or has forgotten, his church history of the past thousand years.

* * *

Protestant chaplains in the Armed Forces and Veterans Administration hospitals have been invited to participate in a sermon-writing contest. The contest, offering \$300 in prizes, is sponsored by the interdenominational General Commission on Chaplains. The best sermon will be published by *The Chaplain*, monthly magazine distributed by the General Commission.

* * *

In an address before several hundred educational and religious leaders gathered for the 39th annual meeting of the Association of American Colleges in Los Angeles, Calif., Dr. M. E. Sadler, president of Texas Christian University, said: "As applied to our education, we have interpreted the great principle of religious freedom to mean freedom from religion and have permitted the development of an educational system which has produced a secularized, materialized society. Nothing could have been farther from the desires and purposes of our forefathers than the stupid interpretation which we have given to their great principle of religious freedom. They wanted freedom of religion, but they wanted religion. Schools have proceeded on the entirely false assumption that if they did not teach religion, they would be neutral. Any school in America which does not teach theism is actually teaching atheism. Children and young people are encouraged in the belief that they will find in their school education a preparation for the important

things in life. When they do not find religion in such a school, a powerful negative impression is made on their minds. Our schools cannot prepare the kind of citizens we need unless and until they do return pure religion to its rightful place in education."

* * *

The United Church Men, the laymen's branch of the National Council of Churches, proposed enactment of laws in all States requiring Bible reading in public schools. The proposal was presented by Rep. Walter H. Judd (R., Minn.). His report noted that according to a recent survey Bible reading in public schools is required by law in twelve States and prohibited by law in nine other States. Seventeen States are silent, and the other ten will "permit" the decision of any local school unit to read the Bible.

* * *

Plans for a Bible translation acceptable to Fundamentalists were revealed to the Rocky Mountain Regional Conference of Independent Fundamental Churches of America. The delegates went on record as rejecting the Revised Standard Version as "not acceptable to Bible believers in general because of evidence of liberal theological bias, both in the text and footnotes, on the part of the translators." The new translation is to be "acceptable to those who adhere to the faith once delivered; it will be accurate and true to the faith, and at the moment the possibilities are that it can be done."

* * *

The Norwegian government has urged parliament to repeal an article in the Constitution which bans the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) from operating in Norway. Article Two of the Constitution adopted in 1814 (when, after their suppression in 1773, the Jesuit order was re-established) declares that "Jesuits and other monkish orders shall not be tolerated here; moreover, Jews are strictly prohibited from entering the country." The ban of Jews was lifted in 1851, and the clause against "other monkish orders" rescinded in 1897; but the ban on Jesuits is still in force. . . . There are only 4,000 Roman Catholics in Norway, with a total population of 3,156,950.

* * *

The Indiana department of the American Legion plans to put a card containing five prayers for mealtime on every hotel, restaurant, and lunchroom table in the State. The plan is part of the department's "Back to God" movement.

Distribution of the first Bible translated into modern Korean (Hankul, see C. T. M., p. 150) has begun in Seoul, Korea. The edition of 100,000 copies will be sold in bookstores and given to orphanages, hospitals, and prisoner-of-war camps.

* * *

The Seventh-Day Adventist Church received a multimillion-dollar furniture and lumber manufacturing business at Pendleton, Oreg., from two of its members, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde H. Harris, who believed that "God expects His share of a man's income." The gift is estimated at from eight to ten million dollars—the largest ever received by the Church. Profits from the business will help to support the denomination's hospitals, schools, and churches in 179 countries.

* * *

Before a meeting of an Ohio Pastors' Convention in Columbus, Ohio, attended by 1,300 clergymen, the dean of the (Protestant) Oberlin Divinity School, Dr. Leonard Stidley, praised the Roman Catholic Church for its parochial school system, which, he said, had achieved "complete integration" of religion and education. He prefaced his remarks with the comment that the subject had to be handled with "asbestos gloves" because "it might generate more heat than light." He added: "I could also praise the Jews for doing the same thing," that, however, he had restricted his comments to the Catholic Church because "its parochial schools illustrate what can be done in the way of instilling religion in education."—It seems that we need a little more publicity for our schools.

* * *

Berlin reports that the "progressive" Christian weekly *Verantwortung* (Responsibility), founded last year in Dresden, Soviet Zone, under the sponsorship of the Communist-controlled East German Christian Democratic Union, has discontinued publication. Church spokesmen said the suspension is evidence of the East German regime's failure to make any headway among Christians in the Soviet Zone.

* * *

A new quarterly magazine aiming to encourage the use of Latin as a living language has made its debut in Rome. It is entitled *Latinitas*, is produced in the print shop of the Vatican Library, and edited by a Vatican official, Msgr. Antonio Bacci, one of the world's leading Latin scholars. Everything in the magazine is written in Latin, even to the translation of such terms as rugby football (*ablongi folliis ludus*) and labor movement (*operariis consociandis ratio*).

THEO. HOYER

BOOK REVIEW

All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 South Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis 18, Missouri.

DIE GENESIS. By Karlheinz Rabast. Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Berlin, 1951. 203 pages, 7×9½.

A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE PENTATEUCH. By G. Ch. Aalders. The Tyndale Press, London, 1949. 173 pages, 5¾×8¾.

The first book is a commentary in German on the first twelve chapters of Genesis; as is evident from the title, the second is an isagogical treatise on the Pentateuch. In spite of this divergent purpose they are being reviewed together, because both books advocate and declare the dethronement of the Graf-Wellhausen regime in Pentateuchal criticism. As the readers of this journal know, the documentary hypothesis has for some time ascended the throne of dogma and wielded the scepter of undisputed authority in almost all of Old Testament scholarship. Anyone who committed lese majesty by opposing its pronouncements received verbal lashings as an obscurantist or was ignored by disdainful silence.

It would hardly be in keeping with facts, however, to create the impression that these two small books—less than 400 pages together—have settled the issue once and for all to the satisfaction of everyone. There will be many die-hards among the advocates of the documentary hypothesis evolved by Wellhausen. Others who have accepted this theory merely because some well-known scholar advocated it will say: "You can't throw the painstaking labors of a century of the highest scholarship out of the window as if it were so much junk." Furthermore a "cultural lag" will keep this theory in high school and college textbooks on literature for some time to come.

It is also evident that these two books will not be the last word on this controversial subject because they agree only in rejecting the documentary hypothesis as an explanation for the origin of the Pentateuch. They do not offer the same answer to the questions that arise in a study of the authorship of this part of the Bible.

It is likewise true that many of the strictures against the documentary hypothesis that appear here have been made before. The significance of these books would appear to consist in this, that two European scholars, one a professor at the Free Dutch University of Amsterdam and the other a *Dr. theol.* and a pastor of a German Lutheran *Landeskirche*, bring to a focus the criticism of the Wellhausen theory that appeared especially since the turn of the present century.

As we should expect, Rabast treats the questions of authorship mainly in the introduction of his commentary. But he also devotes sections of the body of the book to this question: e.g., pp. 86—88 to the "double" Creation account; pp. 162—164 to the "conflated" story of the deluge. He defends the thesis that Moses himself used various sources in composing the Pentateuch substantially as we have it before us today.

Aalders also contends that Moses can be called the writer of the Pentateuch, but cannot be convinced that he is "the *final* and *sole* author of this historical book" (p. 158). He finds *post-Mosaic* and *a-Mosaic*, such as the account of the death of Moses and other statements and sections which were written after the time of Moses. What this later writer (or writers) added was, however, just as fully inspired and authoritative as the words that Moses himself presented. "Whoever were the men who shared in the completion of the Pentateuch, and whatever was their contribution to it, they were servants of God who performed their part through His inspiration, and so gave us this part of the infallible and authoritative Holy Scriptures" (p. 156). This completion of the book took place no later than the reign of Saul and David. Nor does he find that this assumption is in conflict with the statements of "our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who shed His blood to redeem us from our sins, and of His Apostles who preached the gospel of the cross to a fallen World" (p. 139), because "there is no explicit evidence that Jesus and His Apostles regarded Moses as the author of the entire Pentateuch as we have it now in our Bible" (p. 146).

A final word should be said on the volume by Rabast as a commentary. While the author often refers to the Bible as the "earthen vessel" in which we have God's Word, he presents a conservative and constructive interpretation of these important chapters. He brings this conservative orientation to bear also on many modern questions. Thus he says regarding myths in the Old Testament in his comments on certain terms in Genesis 1: "The Bible itself has already de-mythologized [heathen concepts] and does not need to be de-mythologized by us." Especially interesting is his emphasis on the symmetrical structure of many sections of Genesis and his use of numbers as a significant aspect of the text.

WALTER R. ROEHRS

CRUCIAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD. By George E. Ladd. Erdmans Publishing House, 1952. 193 pages, 5¼×6½. \$3.00.

In Lutheran theology the term "kingdom of God" is understood primarily in a soteriological sense, in Calvinistic theology chiefly as an eschatological concept. This book is a study in eschatology. Dr. Ladd, associate professor of New Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary, presented the subject matter of this book in lectures at Western Conservative Baptist Seminary at Portland, Oreg. His bibliographical ref-

erences indicate that he is thoroughly familiar with the various types of eschatological aberrations within the Church, such as post- and pre-millennialism, dispensationalism, "realized eschatology," and the views of Ritschl, Schweitzer, and Liberalism. His critique of each in the narrow confines of his lectures is, of course, very superficial, in view of such treatises as the Dallas Seminary professor L. S. Chafer's eight-volume dogmatics based on the theory of dispensationalism. The author's main problem is: Can the Kingdom of God be both future and present? and answers affirmatively. In this we agree with him. But we differ with him in his "soteriological" approach to the Kingdom of God. A strong overtone of the Calvinistic "sovereignty of God" becomes evident in his view that the Kingdom of God is God acting in power and exercising His sovereignty to bind Satan and to restore human society to its rightful place of willingly serving God. We differ from the author's entire eschatological approach. He holds that this reign of God has been restored in part through the personal activity of Jesus, but that at His coming Christ will bring further manifestation of the Kingdom which is to be established in this world. Lutheran theology holds the paradox of the "already-not yet," i. e., the Kingdom of God is fully established now through faith in Christ's complete conquest of Satan and the full redemption of mankind through the Cross, but that faith has not yet been changed to sight. Dr. Ladd holds that the Kingdom is a vital reality in the experience of those who are delivered from the power of Satan and have yielded to God. But the *full* realization of God's reign is still future, and only in the millennial age, when Christ will rule personally over the earth, will there be a measurable approximation of the will of God on this earth and the "golden age" will be realized. He finds support for this basically Calvinistic view in his millennial interpretation of Revelation 20. In his opinion the millennium will be the period in which Christ will set forth His great sovereign will over all nations.

F. E. MAYER

GLAUBENSGERECHTIGKEIT NACH LUTHERS LEHRE. By H. J. Iwand, Chr. Kaiser Verlag, Muenchen, 1951. 93 pages, 5½×9. Paper. DM 4.80.

The author, professor of Systematic Theology at Goettingen, was a leader in the resistance movement against the Nazi regime. This group of prominent Lutheran and Reformed theologians and pastors advocated the formation of an Evangelical Church in Germany which would unite the two confessions. They argued that the confessional fences which had been torn down during the persecution must not be rebuilt after the war. This monograph, dedicated to Martin Niemoeller, contains an outline of Luther's theology. The author wants to show that Luther's theology is the glorious possession of the entire Church, and as little as Luther usurped the doctrine of the righteousness of faith, so little dare the modern Lutheran

Church claim exclusive rights to Luther's doctrine. It is well known that no theologian of the Christian Church has so fully caught the spirit of the dialectics of the New Testament, especially of St. Paul, as Luther did. Professor Iwand has succeeded exceptionally well in capturing the paradoxical nature of Luther's theology. A few samples may indicate the method which Dr. Iwand has employed. Under the heading "The Knowledge of God and the Knowledge of Sin" the author quotes Luther to the effect that God confronts man in His Word, and in this confrontation God changes us by His Word so that we are of the same mind with God. If, however, man refuses to change, but insists on remaining what he is, then he will attempt to change the Word of God. The greatness of Luther's theology is undoubtedly in his deep understanding of sin in its true nature. Luther said that in treating sin man is like the patient who tries to doctor his symptoms without recognizing the nature of his disease, and while he removes the symptoms, the sickness has in the meantime become fatal. Not understanding the true nature of sin, the moralist would put a new patch on an old garment, whereas we must be clothed with an entirely new garment. Luther, who is described as enamored of mysticism early in life, had learned to know the basic difference between the mystic and the Christian way to God. The mystic finds the highest form of ecstasy in the belief that he has become like God. In the realm of faith, however, where the Cross of Christ is supreme, our perverse attempt to be like God is brought to nought, and the lowly weakness of the flesh which we perversely despised is fully restored. The author concludes the section on Law and Gospel with a lengthy quotation from Luther to the effect that Satan schemes to make man believe that he is free, blessed, mighty, healthy, and full of vitality. For Satan knows that if man would know his real condition, he would cry to God for deliverance. Professor Iwand summarizes Luther's dialectics on Law and Gospel as follows: The Law brings sin and the "I" so closely together that they become one flesh and one will. Likewise the righteousness of faith brings the "I" of faith and the Lord Jesus so closely together that they become one being and will. There can therefore be no neutral ground. It is either: Behind and beyond sin is death; or: in the righteousness of faith is life.

F. E. MAYER

DARKNESS VISIBLE. A Revelation and Interpretation of Freemasonry.

By Walton Hannah. London, Augustine Press, 1952. 228 pages.

\$2.50. Order from Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis 18, Mo.

This is, in any case, a book which is widely discussed in England. Its subject is Freemasonry. Its author is the Rev. Walton Hannah, an Anglican rector, now residing in London. The book is a sober critique of Freemasonry, an expansion of the author's provocative article: "Should a Christian Be a Freemason?" which appeared in *Theology* (January,

1951). Both the article and the book so stirred the British clergy and laity as well as the British press that hardly a journal and newspaper failed to take note of this exposure of Freemasonry. Hundreds upon hundreds of letters reached the author, some approving, others disapproving of the author's position. In defense of the Masonic point of view an anonymous author, who claims to be both a clergyman and a Freemason, recently published a rebuttal of Mr. Hannah's book under the title *Light Invisible*. Though this book is a scathing denunciation of Mr. Hannah's critique, it is, in effect, a confirmation of Mr. Hannah's position. There can be no doubt that "sooner or later the Church of England, if she is to preserve the integrity of her Christian witness, will have to face the issue and modify, or at least define, her attitude to Freemasonry" (Preface, pp. 5, 6).

The author summarizes the purpose of the book in the following paragraph (p. 9):

The scope of these chapters is not to analyse [the] influence [of Freemasonry] on the political and social life of the nation, still less to discuss the influence on the craft of Templarism or Rosicrucianism, or to attempt a history of Freemasonry in its development from the Catholic guilds or lodges of operative stone-masons in the Middle Ages through the speculative and Deistic seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to the pan-religious non-Christian universalism which the Craft upholds today. As Freemasonry very considerably overlaps with the non-Roman Churches, particularly with the Church of England, my concern is rather to examine the extent to which this overlap is morally and theologically justified. In other words, to inquire whether Freemasonry is compatible with the Christian faith.

In Part I (about the Ritual) Mr. Hannah discusses, in ten chapters, the following topics: How known; Why written; Masonic obligations; Is Masonry a religion?; The clergy and the Craft; The great dilemma; Benevolence, brotherhood and tolerance; Context; Much ado about nothing; Ecclesiastical condemnations of Freemasonry. In Part II, the author spells out the ritual of the first three degrees and of the Royal Arch. Two appendixes provide valuable information on variations in Scottish, Irish, American workings, and other degrees. A third appendix supplies details on Masonic services in Christian churches. A carefully compiled and annotated bibliography and five meaningful illustrations enhance the value of the book. Since the appearance of the late Dr. Theodore Graebner's *Is Masonry a Religion?* (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1946), Mr. Hannah's book is the most significant investigation of the religion of Freemasonry. Though it addresses itself primarily to the people of England, the book is so eminently relevant to the American scene that no one who is truly concerned about the incompatibility of Freemasonry with the Christian faith can afford to disregard Mr. Hannah's publication. May God bless the author's testimony to the truth which is in Christ Jesus!

PAUL M. BRETSCHER

LIGHT INVISIBLE. By "Vindex." The Regency Press, 105 Great Russell St., London, W. C. 1. 156 pages, 5×7½. 10/6 Net.

"Vindex" is an Episcopalian parson in England who vehemently turns against Mr. Hannah for having attacked Freemasonry. The make-up of the book is extremely poor and so also is the author's defense of Freemasonry. There is much invective and bitter berating of all who oppose Freemasonry in Romanism and Protestantism, but, after all is said, the "defense" proves only that confessing Christians have no business to be members of the lodge. The writer claims to be a "Christian and a minister of the Gospel, as well as a loyal Mason" (p. 46). He believes himself to be a Christian because he believes that "Jesus Christ showed us, more than any other man who has ever lived, what God is like" (*ibid.*). He believes also that Christ "has indeed saved us from our sins by showing us a way to overcome them, and by resisting evil even unto death" (*ibid.*). He values "the sacrament of Holy Communion as a perpetual reminder of that death, an everlasting witness to the fact that good is stronger than evil, that light must prevail over darkness" (*ibid.*). As "Vindex" denies Christ and His atoning work in the Christian sense and stresses works as central in his religion, so, as he shows, does the lodge to which he belongs. The Christian reader is appalled at the syncretism which the author defends in Freemasonry and reaches the conclusion that to join the fraternity means to deny and surrender what is central in his faith.

J. T. MUELLER

EATING AND DRINKING CHRIST. By Herman Hoeksema. Eerdmans Publishing House, 1952. 189 pages, 5×7½. \$2.50.

This is Volume VII in a series of expository texts on the Heidelberg Catechism. This well-known Catechism was planned by its authors in 52 units so that the entire body of Christian truth could be covered within the space of one year. The present volume contains units XXVII—XXXI; the first three are devoted to the Lord's Supper and the fourth to the Office of the Keys. In this volume the author expands the Reformed thesis that the eating and drinking of the Lord's Supper must be taken as purely spiritual: a spiritual food, a spiritual operation whereby the communicant is spiritually united with Christ, and a spiritual mouth, i. e., faith. The author condemns the doctrines of transubstantiation and consubstantiation; the latter he mistakenly attributes to Lutheranism.

F. E. MAYER

APOSTLE TO ISLAM. A Biography of Samuel M. Zwemer. By J. Christy Wilson. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich., 1952. 261 pages, 6×9. \$4.00.

The author of this biography of Samuel Martinus Zwemer knew him well, and he had access to all diaries, journals, correspondence, and manuscripts which might shed light on the life and labors of the man. Except for the final event all the material was carefully examined by the subject

of the biography himself. The author's style makes for delightful reading. He shows how Zwemer and James Cantine first went out in 1891 to establish the Arabian Mission for the Reformed Church in America; how later, when he worked in Cairo, his travels took him to other parts of Africa, to Arabia, to India, and to China; how he established the *Muslim World*; and how in 1929 he accepted an appointment to the chair of History of Religion and Christian Missions at Princeton Seminary. Zwemer wrote some fifty books in his lifetime. They cover almost every phase of Islam and missions to Muslims, but he also wrote on religion, and on missions generally, and prepared a number of devotional books. When he became a member of the faculty at Princeton Seminary, he joined the Presbyterian Church. He died on April 2, 1952, lacking ten days of being 85 years of age.

After he had served seventeen years in Cairo, the local press referred to Zwemer as "the leading authority on Islamics from the Christian standpoint" (p. 92). As his burdens grew heavier, his strength increased, and this earned for him the title "Steam engine in breeches." In his teaching on religion Zwemer's position is "that mankind had a primitive revelation of monotheism and that other religions, from primitive animistic idol worship all the way to speculative and philosophical departures from basic theism, are tangents away from the original revelation of God" (p. 211).

We like the chapter given to brief descriptions of the many books he wrote. How different the study of Islamics and mission work among Muslims would be if Zwemer had not gone on before!

E. C. ZIMMERMANN

THE MIGHTY SAVIOUR. By Arthur J. Moore. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York, 1952. 154 pages, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{3}{8}$. \$2.00.

RIDE THE WILD HORSES. By J. Wallace Hamilton. Fleming H. Revell Co., Westwood, N. J., 1952. 160 pages, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{8}$. \$2.50.

JOYOUS ADVENTURE. By David A. MacLennan. Harper and Brothers Publishers, New York, 1952. 192 pages, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$. \$2.50.

Arthur J. Moore is the bishop of the Atlanta area of the Methodist Church. For six years he was bishop in charge of all of the foreign mission work of his Church and his illustrations indicate this experience. Occasional passages stress a theology which the Lutheran finds unfamiliar, such as "decision" (p. 97 ff.) and a converse reluctance to describe the power of the Gospel by which decision is wrought. The sermons are quite explicit concerning Christ as Redeemer and as power for living. One entire sermon deals with the latter, "The Credentials of a Life Lived for Him" (p. 127 ff.). Interesting is the point concerning the life after the grave: "We are going to have a wider ministry there" (p. 151).

J. Wallace Hamilton has attracted attention because of the success of his community church in St. Petersburg, Fla., where he preaches to tremendous audiences through the "drive-in" device. This collection of sermons deals with the "untamed impulses of human nature" and takes

its title from James 3:3. The sermons are well written, alive to contemporary thought and need, and interesting in the variety of approach to a preaching area which so easily becomes tawdry. Individual references seem to reflect an evangelical theology. Like many sermons, however, these tend to leave the great power for the new life, Titus 2:11 ff., "presupposed."

David MacLennan is Professor of Preaching and Pastoral Care at the Divinity School of Yale University. The sermons in this collection are "for the Christian Year," and it is interesting to gather the reflections of a preacher in a communion less liturgical than our own upon the themes of Advent, Christmas, Lent, and other liturgical or ecclesiastical "days" and seasons. Mr. MacLennan employs basic texts and discusses Christ as Redeemer. In his efforts to restate the Biblical descriptions of Christ's redemptive work, the author loses clarity. Many of his titles are engaging; thus on 2 Cor. 6:9, "Good News for 'Nobodies'"; for Easter, Luke 24:28, 29, "Present—Tense; Future—Perfect." While euphonious and competent as literary products, the sermons are also thoughtful theologically. Like that of other preachers in the Scottish tradition, the accent of Dr. MacLennan is more on the sovereignty than on the grace of God.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

HOW TO WIN SOULS. By Eugene Myers Harrison and Walter L. Wilson. Van Kampen Press, Wheaton, Ill., 1952. 156 pages, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{7}{8}$. \$2.00.

FLAME FOR THE ALTAR. By William Ward Ayer. Zondervan Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1952. 198 pages, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{7}{8}$. \$2.50.

The authors of the first volume are Baptists. Dr. Harrison has been a missionary in Burma and now is Associate Professor of Missions and Evangelism at Wheaton College. Dr. Wilson is president of the Kansas City Bible College. The book is brief and neatly outlined. Repentance is set forth as sorrow for sin, a condition for salvation, rather than a gift of God worked through the Gospel (p. 33). Likewise faith in Christ is described as a condition rather than a gift (p. 34). The chapter "How to Begin" discusses some of the conventional openings for evangelistic conversations. Different types of "unsaved" or unbelieving persons are listed, among them "religious" people who depend upon religious actions for salvation, and Roman Catholics. Some of the objections to the latter involve misinterpretation of the Sacraments. The book may be useful in the parish library for church workers.

Dr. Ayer's book comprises the Bob Jones University Lectures on Evangelism for 1952. In contrast to last year's volume by Dr. Rees, these lectures are of a more inspirational nature. The author speaks with sober experience, and only occasionally, as in part of the chapter "The Effective Evangelistic Sermon," does the specific revivalistic accent intrude. The author is impressed with the sociological problems of our time which impede the intake of the Gospel.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

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